

The Sturgill Mountain Banjo Kit

Plate 146 shows the pieces that come with the Sturgill kit, as well as an example of the finished banjo the kit produces. There are several variations that (most incorporated from traditional instruments Dave has seen, such as those in the following plates) that we have not previously noted: the thin hoop, for example, that fits into corresponding grooves on the inside of the top and back.

Note also that the commercial 6" head is held into place by a wooden ring, which is in turn held in place by 5 wooden blocks nailed or screwed into the underside of the top. Note also the tailpiece - simply 3 brass brads driven into the top. The strings hook around their heads. Design and cut your own sound holes. Has fretted fingerboard.

The diagrams that come with the instructions in the kit:

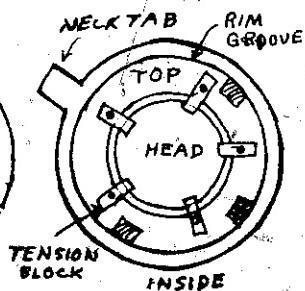
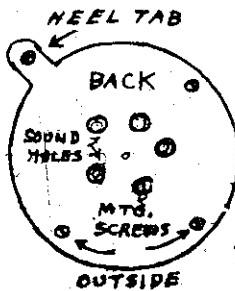
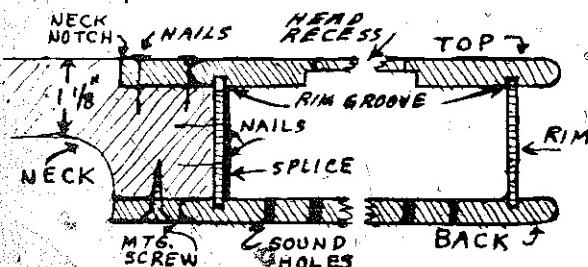


PLATE 145

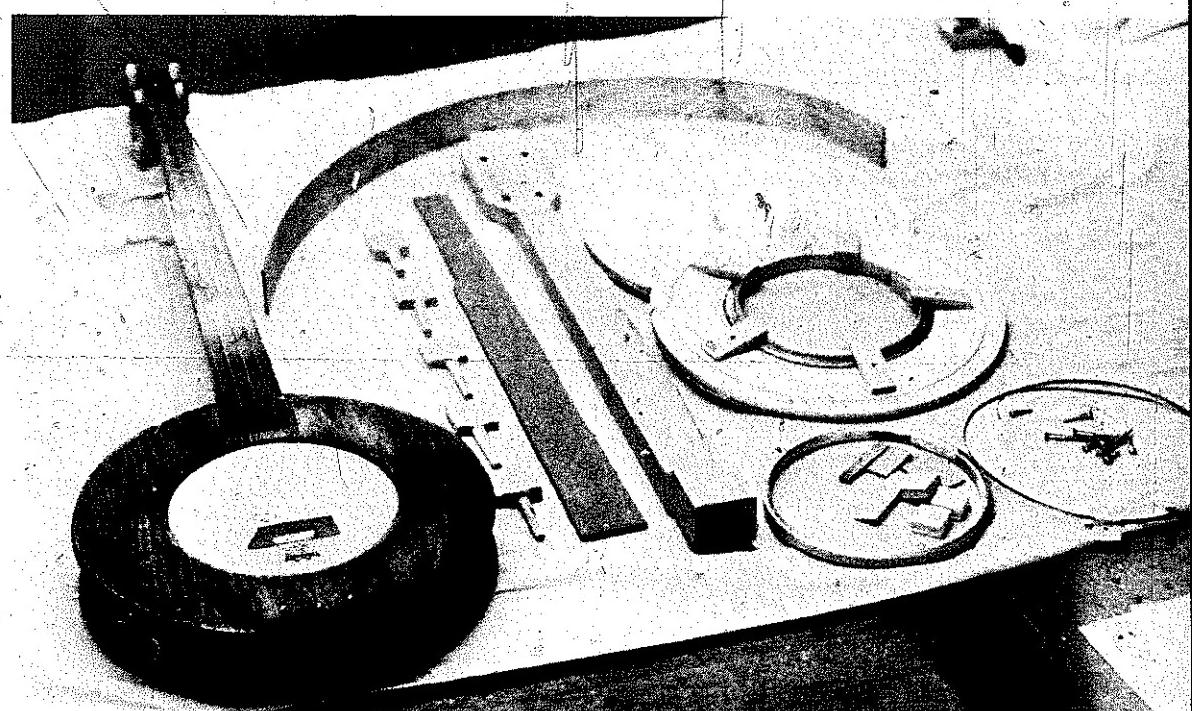


PLATE 146

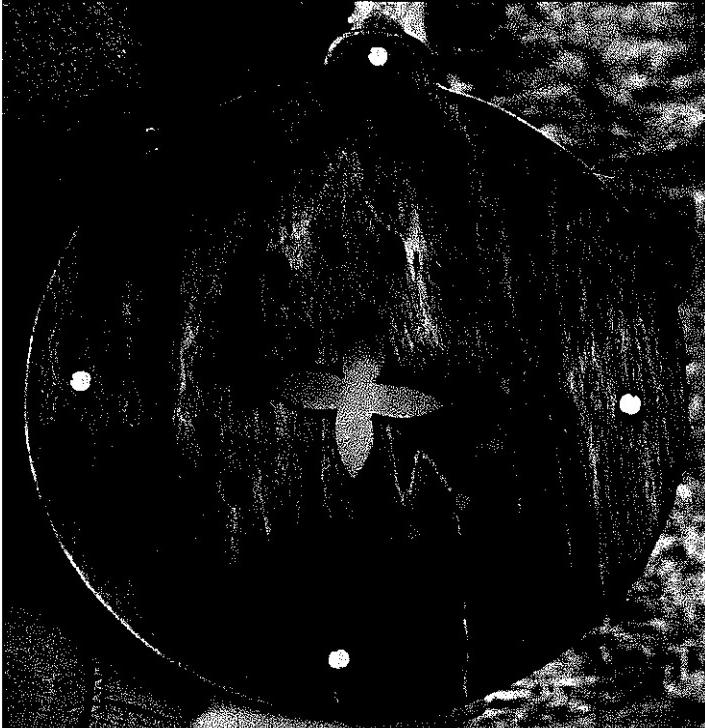


PLATE 147



PLATE 148



PLATE 149

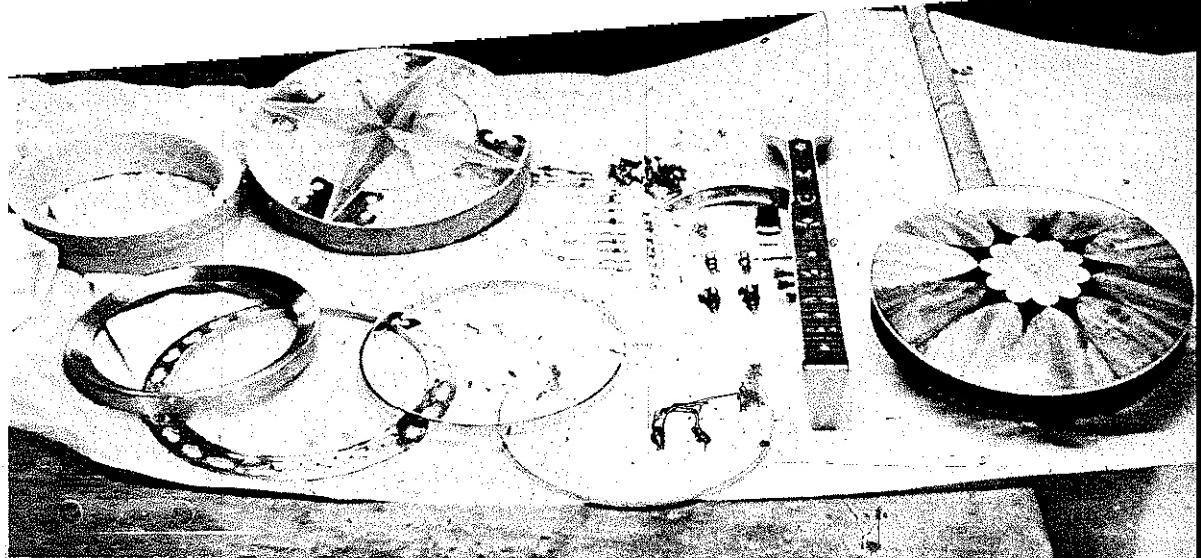


PLATE 150 The component parts of the most elaborate Sturgill banjo laid out. They include a fully inlaid resonator.

worked for a while in a small musical factory in Nashville that was foun- dering, then left, came back home, built a shop and dug in. His two sons, meanwhile, had been doing some wandering of their own—one worked for the Evans Steel Guitar Company in Burlington, North Carolina, for a while—but they, too, were circling closer and closer to home. Now they're Dave's partners in what has turned into a thriving business in guitars, banjos, mandolins, and dulcimers. Neither Dave, Danny nor John has ever regretted the move. As John said, "Being born in Washington was an accident I couldn't help. I never did count that home. I spent all my summers down here. Now I'm here to stay."

Recently Dave went to Washington to attend a dinner celebration that Bell was sponsoring. He ran into a friend there whom he had worked with, and they began to talk about the move he had made. Asked Dave, "Who was president of this company when you and I started to work for it?"

The friend said, "I'm not sure," and thought for a few minutes. "It was either Mr. Wilson, or . . ."

As Dave tells the story: "I knew who was president at that time because I'd made it a point to find out. So I reminded him which one it was. I said, 'Now that wasn't even thirty years ago, and you're not even sure who the president of the company was when you started.' I says, 'Think about this a little bit. Twenty years from now, there won't be anybody working for this company that will know you or I either one ever worked for it. But,' I says, 'a hundred years from now, they'll be people who will know I made musical instruments.'"

Dave is convinced that the move away from Washington saved his life—and his spirit. "When it gets down to a question of security, the only security you can possibly have on this earth is what your Creator gives you. It

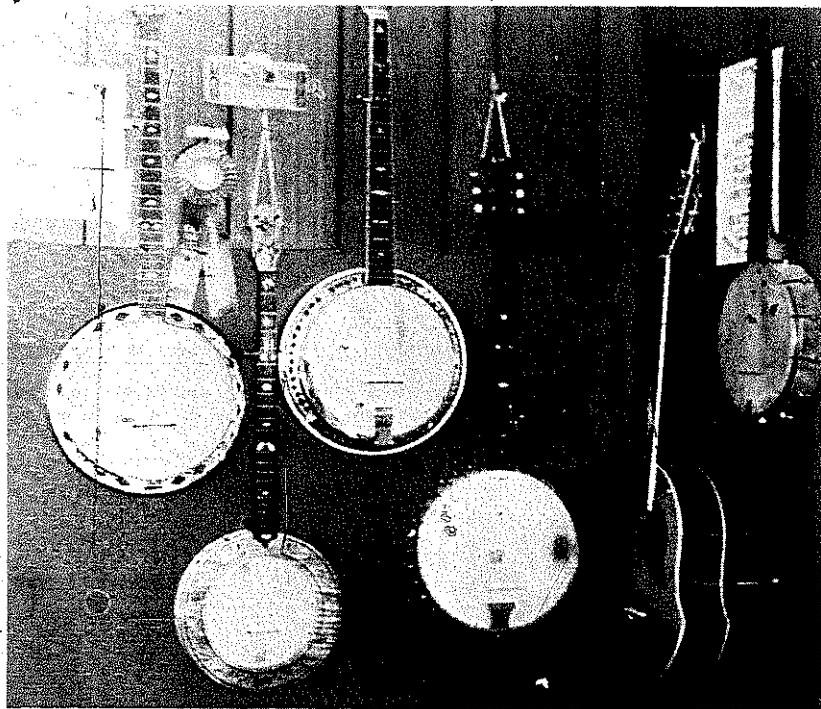


PLATE 151

PLATES 151 and 152 The walls of Dave's shop are filled with instruments they have made—everything from mandolins and fiddles to guitars and banjos.

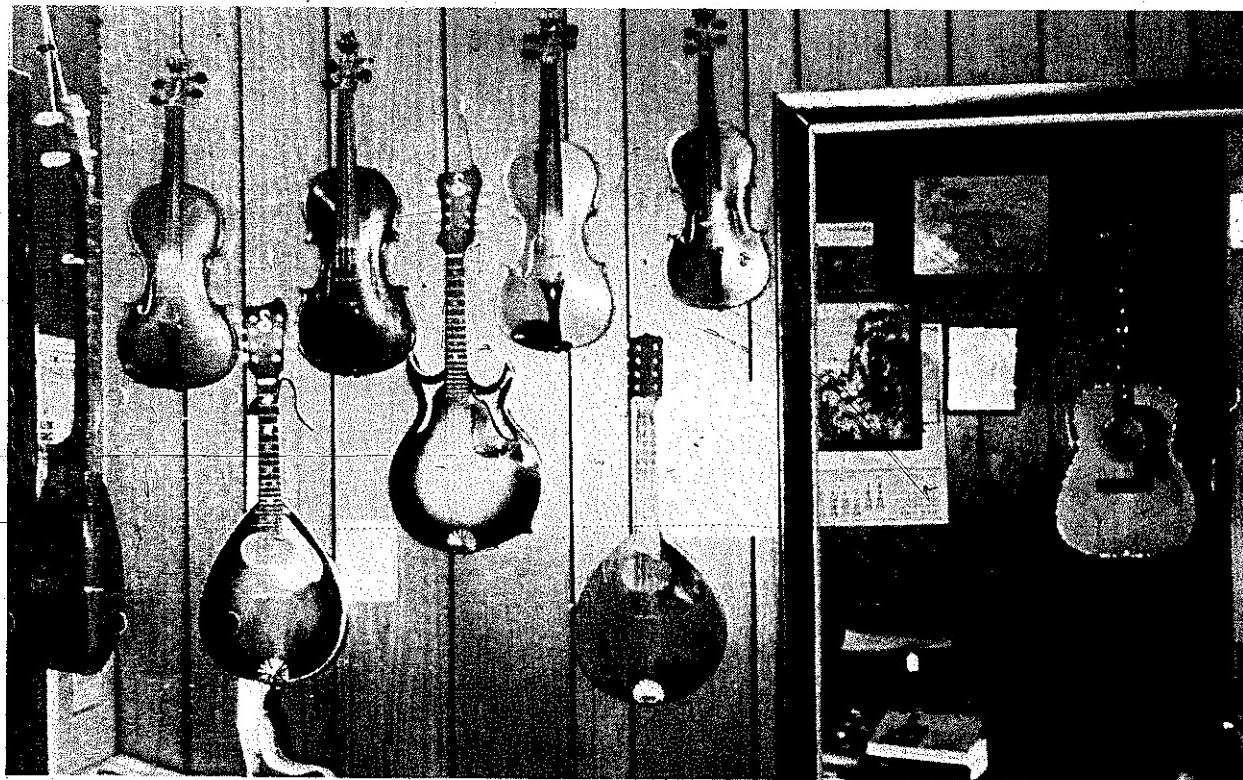


PLATE 152

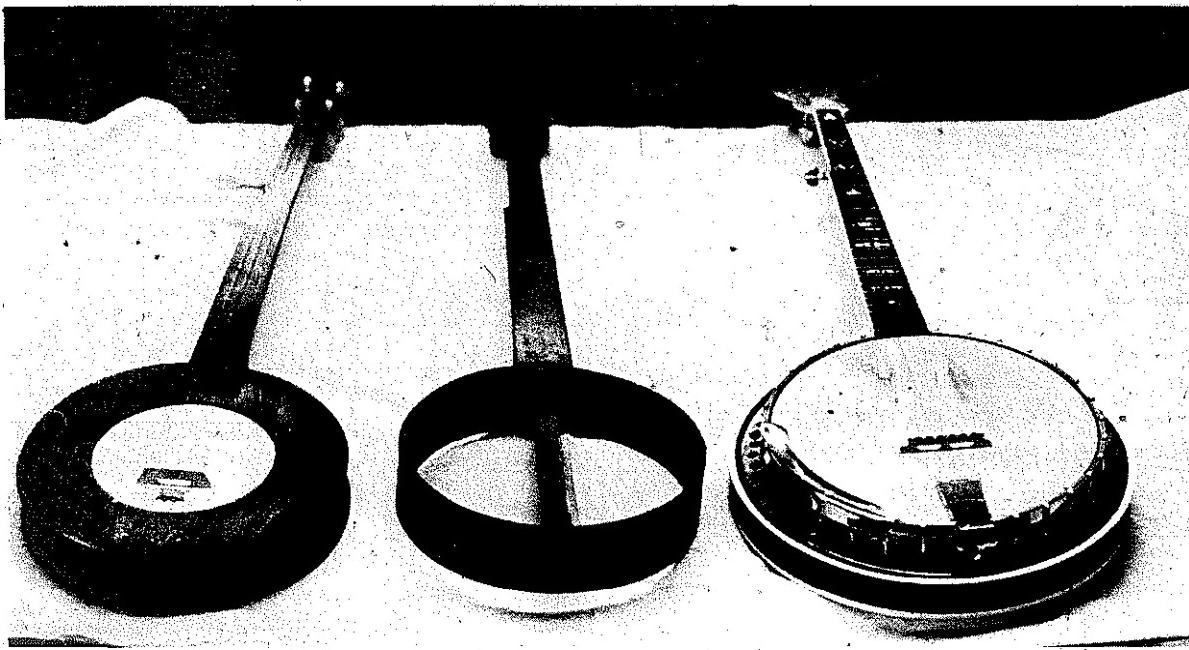


PLATE 153 The evolution of the banjo from its simplest form to the Hicks-Harmon-Glenn variety to the most modern, complex form worthy of an Earl Scruggs.

Plates 154-171 illustrate four varieties of banjos which Dave has in his collection. They are documented in the following four groups and in the "Dave Sturgill" section of the comparison chart (Plate 175).

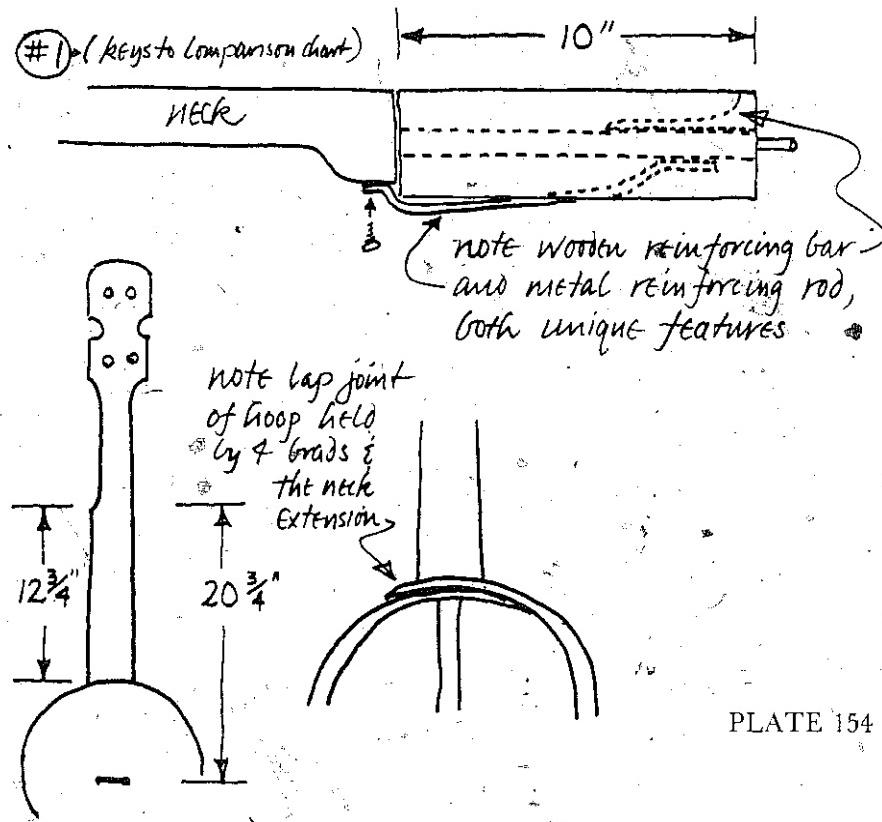


PLATE 154



PLATE 155

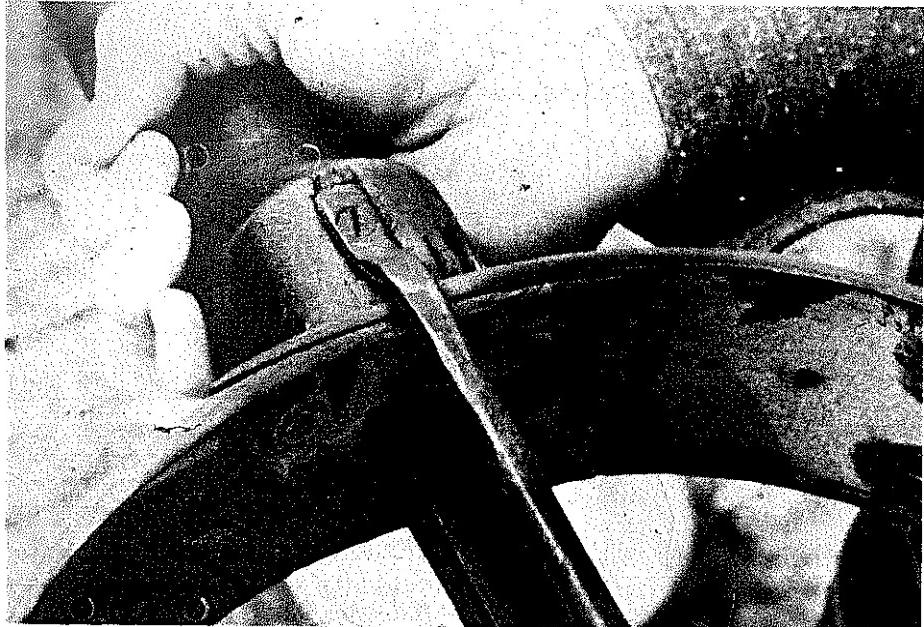


PLATE 156

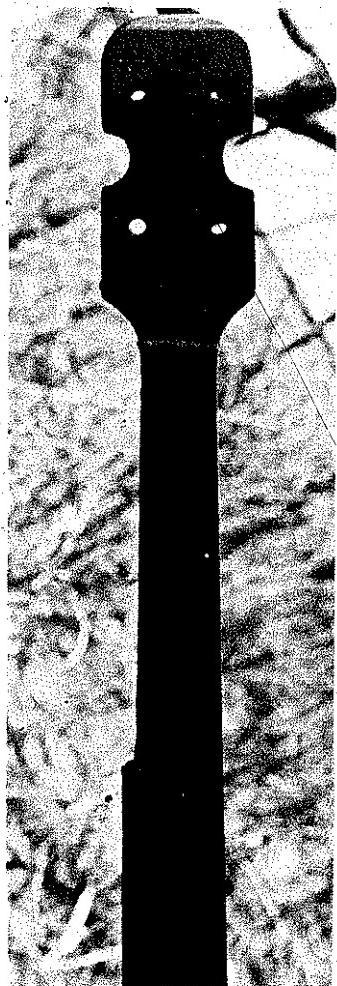
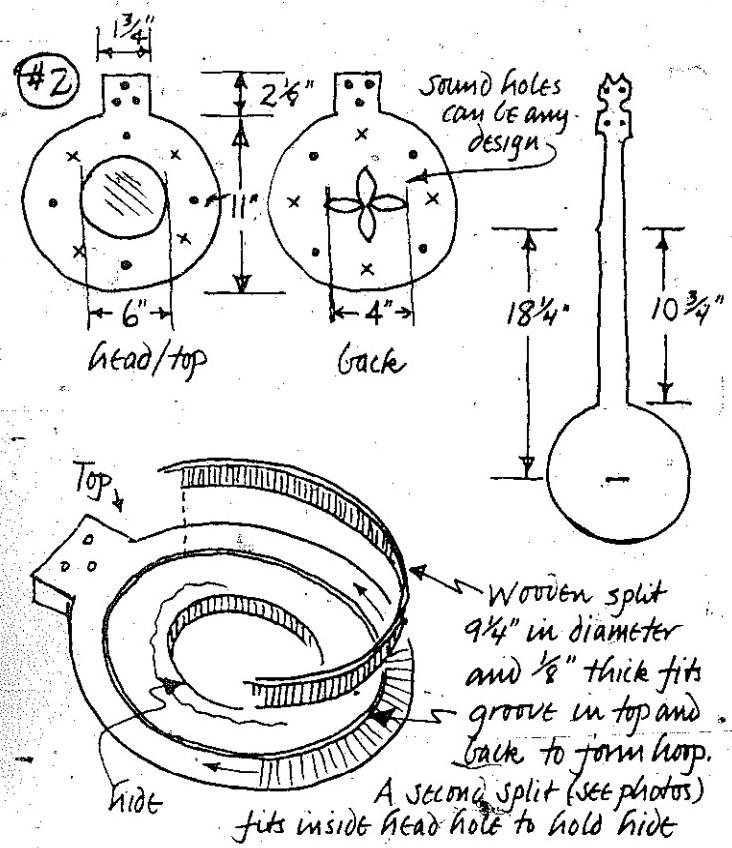


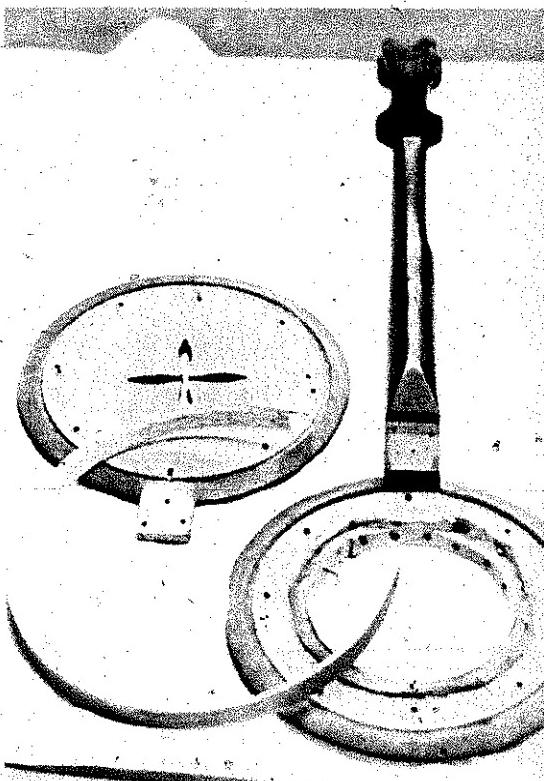
PLATE 157

PLATE 158



Hoop split meets at, and is attached to, neck. Pegs hold the top and back together inside this hoop. In paired diagrams at top left, • indicates where peg went in, × where it came out. Note sloped, beveled edges on top and back.

PLATE 159



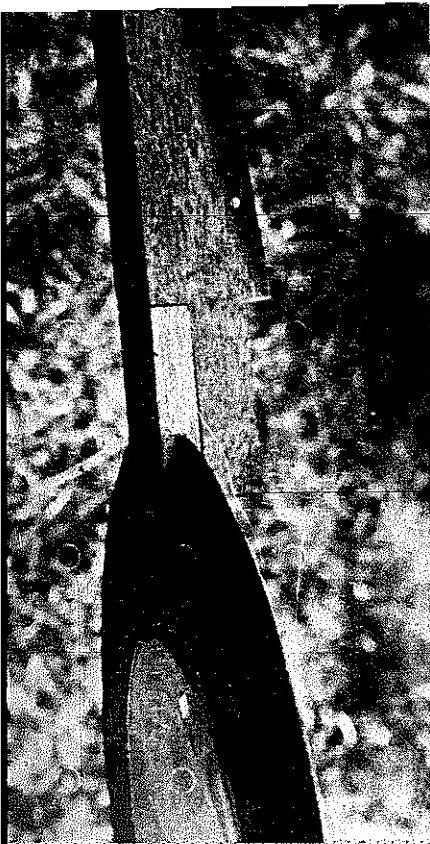


PLATE 161

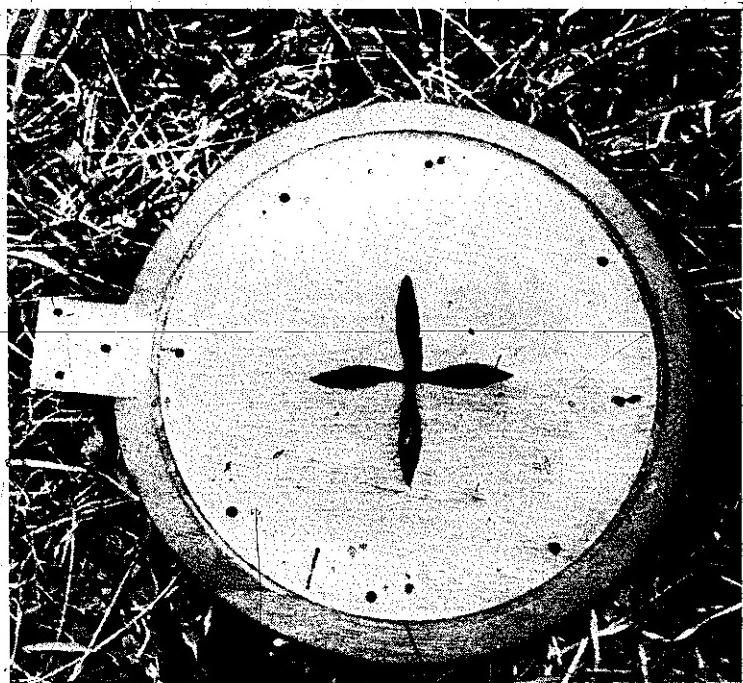


PLATE 162

PLATE 163

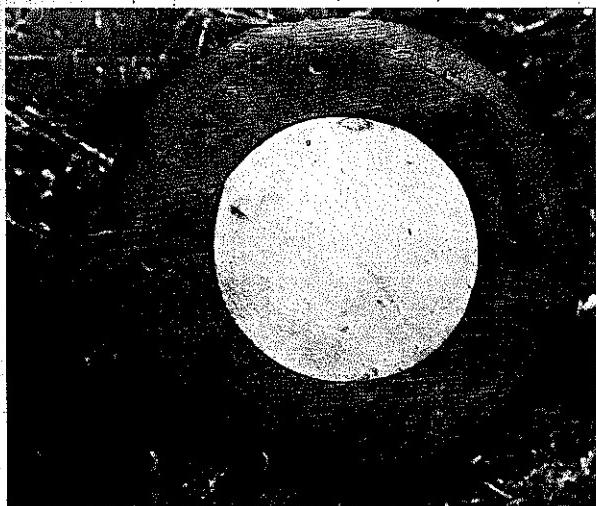
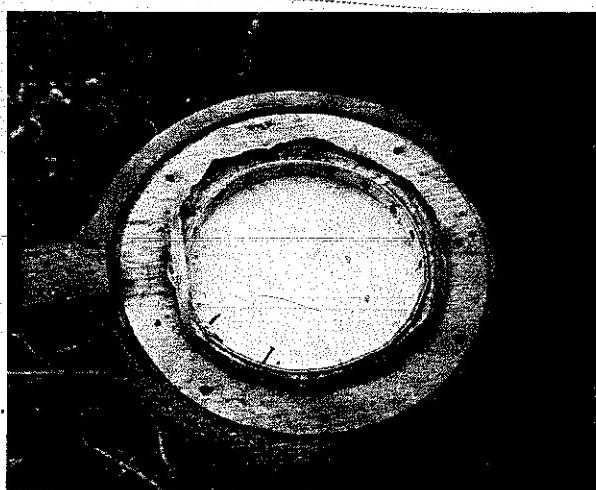
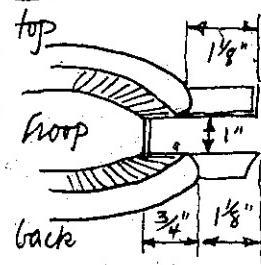


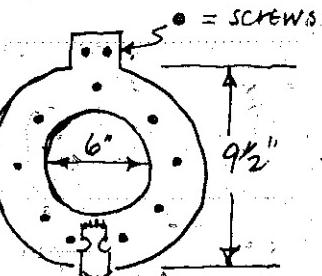
PLATE 164



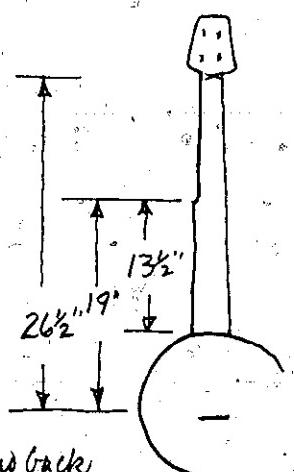
#3



note that banjo is fretted



Center hoop is
7 1/2" in diameter
Back has one
screw through tab



In photos, note
design holes made in
back. Holes are in
a 3 1/2" in diameter
circle. Note also
rounded edges of top and back

PLATE 165

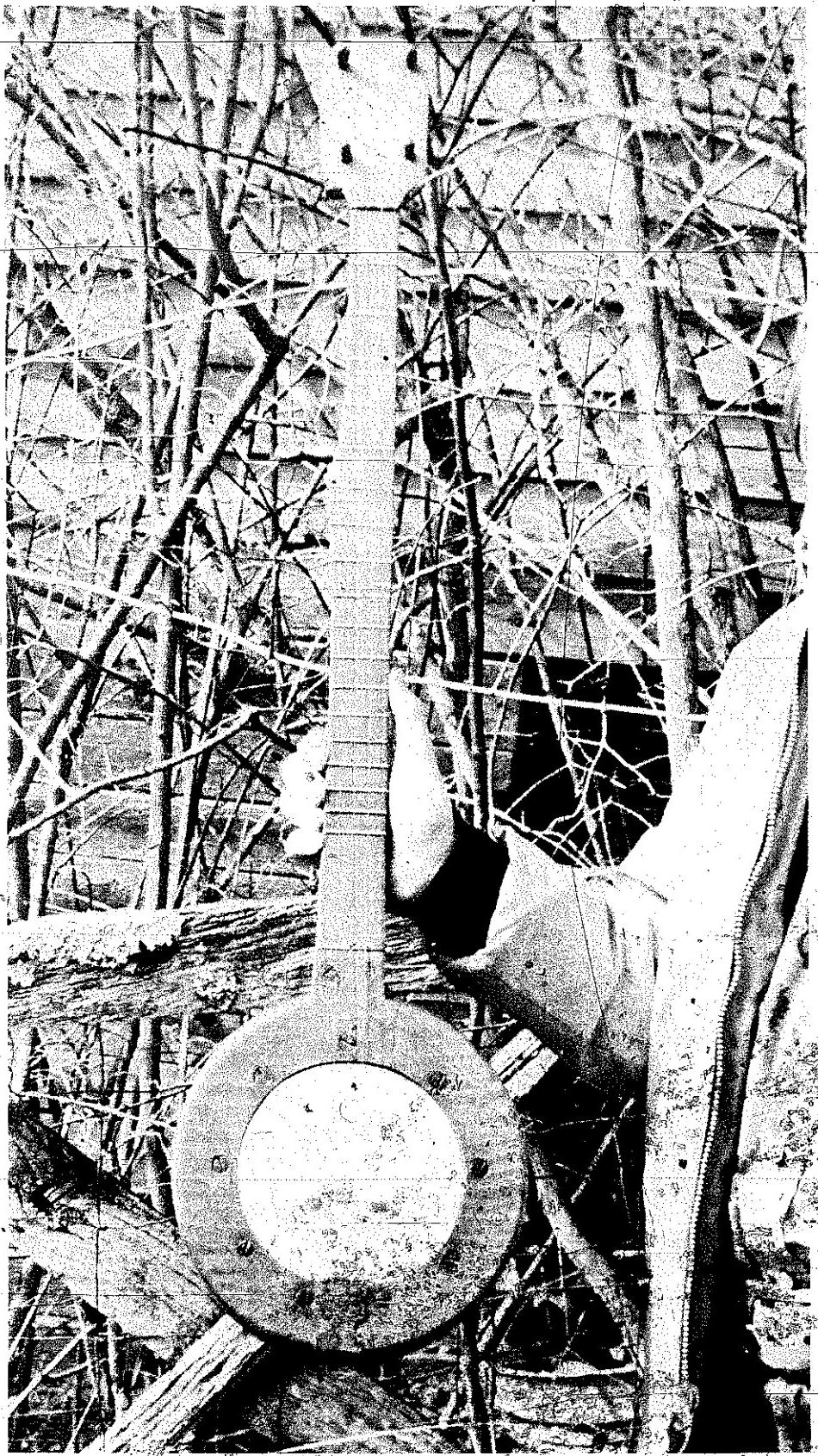




PLATE 167

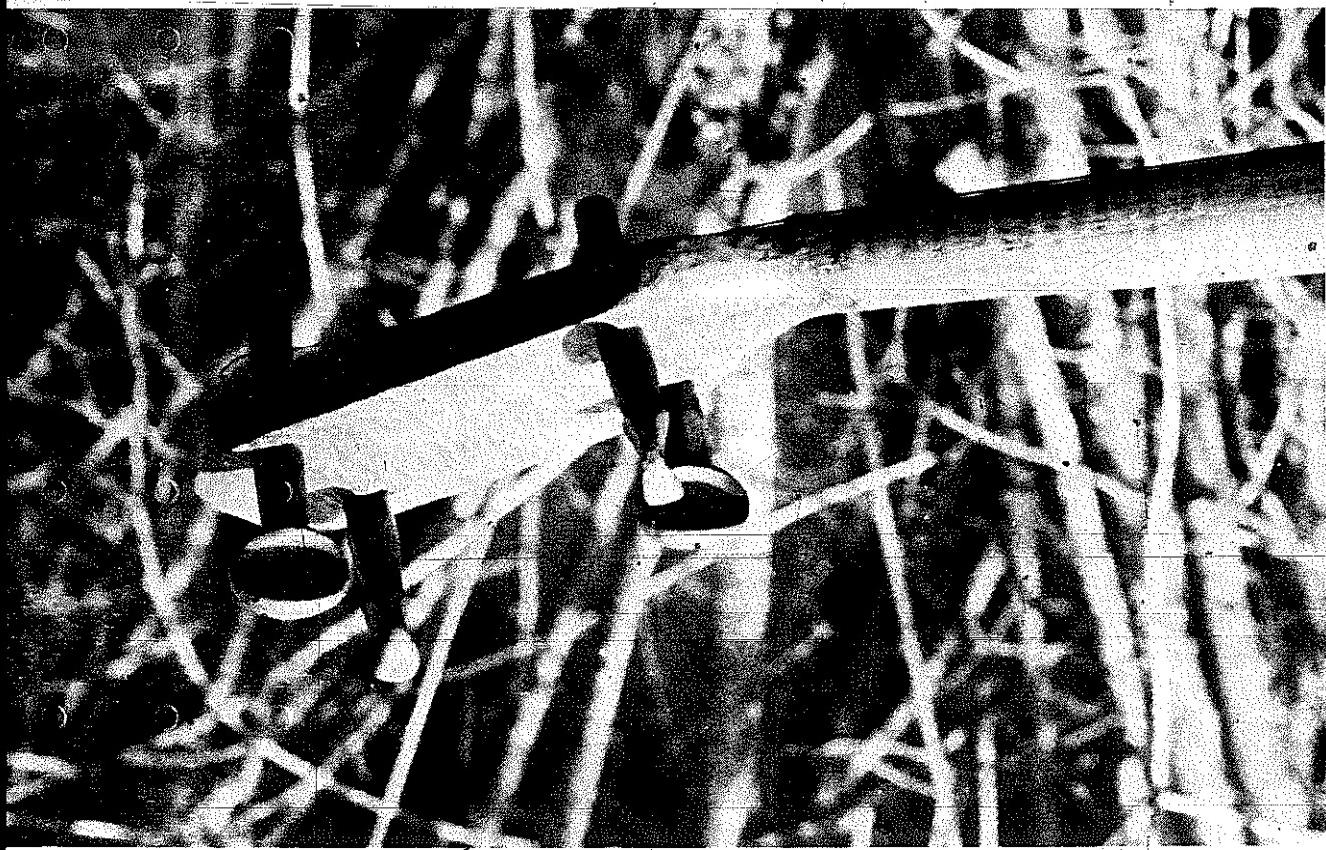


PLATE 168

BANJOS AND DULCIMERS

doesn't come from anywhere else. He can take it all away from you just like that, or he can give it back to you. I don't have to worry about health insurance because I figure He's going to look after me. So I gave up life insurance, health insurance, pension—all the rest of it—but I have absolutely no regrets. Smartest thing I ever did as far as I'm concerned, because I know now that if I'd stayed there, I'd be dead. I was getting ulcers and high blood pressure. My heart was bothering me, and several other things. And all that's gone now. None of it's bothering me. I'm actually in better health now, five years later, than when I left there. I certainly don't regret leaving all that behind. And nothing would ever get me back into it, I'll tell you. Not again.

"I'm not saying you should go completely back to Nature. That's not the answer either. They talk about the good old days. Well, I was raised in those, and I don't want to go back to oil lamps and outdoor toilets. That's a little too much. But there *are* things that are a lot more important than how big an automobile you've got, or how big your bank account is. I was into it up there. An hour and a half fighting traffic every morning to get downtown. An hour and a half fighting that traffic every evening to get back. I'd be a nervous wreck every time I got on the job, and I'd be the same way when I got home. And, boy, I started asking myself every day, 'Why? Why? What in the world am I fighting this for?'"

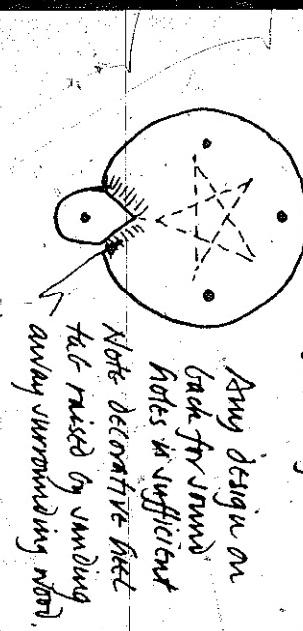
Dave's time away from the mountains, as well as the fact that the original grant for the land he now owns was made to his four-times great-grandfather and there has never been anyone but Sturgills and Indians on it, has made him passionately committed to his land and people:

"The picture that's been drawn of these mountains down through here has been wrong—so much of it—through the years. When I was with Bell, I had several assignments up in New York City. I'd be up there sometimes for two or three weeks at a time, and those people would find out where I was from—that I came right out of the edge of the Smoky Mountains down here in the Appalachians—and they would call me 'Hillbilly.' They'd get a big kick out of it. And I'd say, 'Yeah, but there's one big difference. You can take any boy out of those hills and turn him loose in New York City and he'll get by. But take one of you fellows down in the hills and turn you loose; you'd starve to death.'

"But the picture most of those people had of those mountaineers was pure Little Abner. Now that's where they got it from—the comic strips. And that's the truth today, even. Ninety per cent of the population, they think of everybody down in the mountains in terms of Little Abner. They don't realize it's not that way any more."

"We had some people come in here last summer when I was writing

#4 Note that modern variations added to this traditional basic design



Note that the finger board is inlaid, and glued in place on top of neck. It does not fit flush with top surface of top, as in many others.

Note designs cut into top and frog head

PLATE 169



PLATE 170

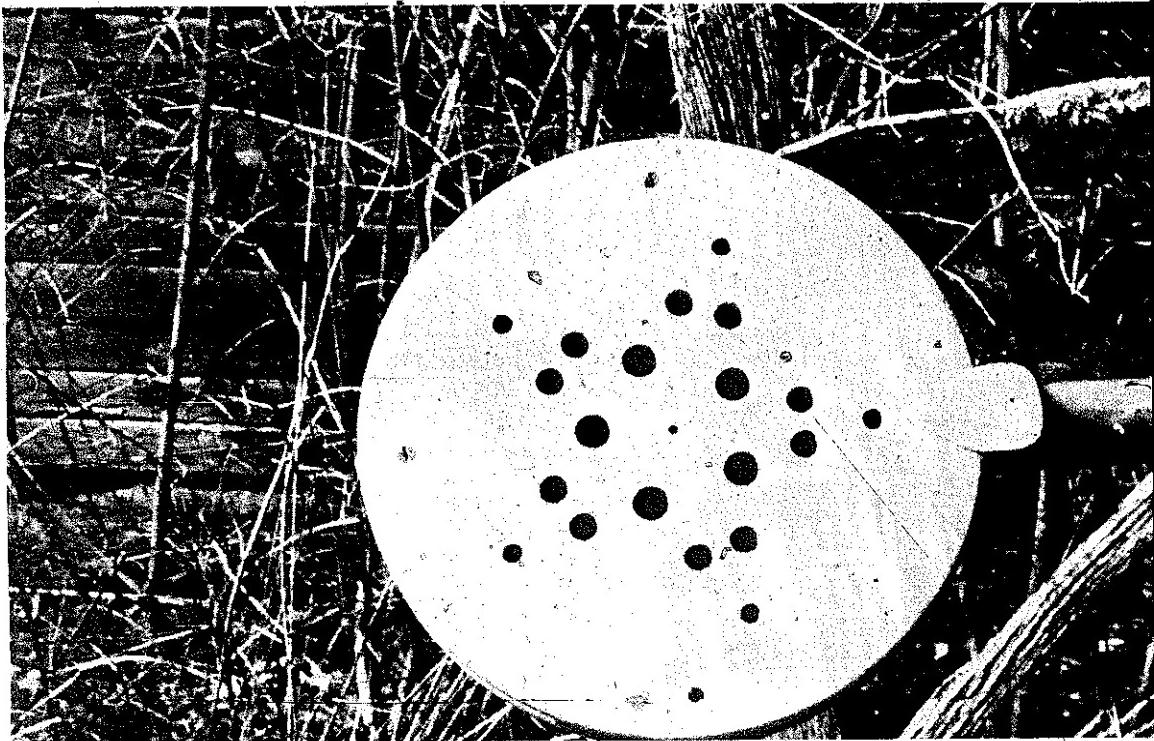


PLATE 171

this history of my family. One woman I corresponded with was from Portland, Oregon. Her ancestors had come from here and she was very interested, and she had some information that I didn't have. She passed that on to me, and we incorporated it into the book. But her daughter came by here last summer and called and introduced herself, and she said she wanted to come down and take a day and visit. And I told her I'd be glad to meet her, to come on down. And so she came on in here into the shop, and the first thing she said after she introduced herself was, 'Tell me something. Where is this Appalachia I've been reading about and hearing about all my life? The picture I've always had about this country was little shacks and people sitting around on the porch.'

"And I said, 'Well, I could take you to a few places like that, but we'd have to hunt for them. They're pretty scarce, and they're still a few here, but . . .'"

Dave, and most of the true mountain people, have humorous stories tucked away about outsiders that have come in looking for REAL mountain folks. We have more than a few ourselves. And the humor is often touched with a sense of anger. Dave told us his favorite:

"I'll tell you the best one I heard of, all. Up at Laurel Springs where there's a motel, service station and so forth, a couple of years ago this

big car from Pennsylvania pulled in there to get some gasoline. And the man and his wife got out—middle-aged couple—and they were straight-out tourists all the way, with the colored glasses and the shorts, the camera, the whole bit. So while the man was putting gas in the car, the woman came around and started talking to him. Says, 'Where can we go to see some real genuine hillbillies? This is the first time we've ever been down in here.'

"And he says, 'Well, lady,' says, 'I'm sorry,' said, 'you can't see any now.'

"She said, 'Well, why?'

"And he said, 'Well, it's out of season.'

"And she says, 'Well, I don't understand.' Says, 'What do you mean it's out of season?'

"And he says, 'Well, they're all up in Pennsylvania teaching school!'"

As a young boy, Dave made his first banjo because he wanted one and was too poor to buy it. He took a plywood packing crate, set it in the creek until it came apart, and then wrapped a strip of its thin wood veneer around a five-gallon can and held it in place with rubber bands until it dried to form the hoop. Then he whittled the neck out with a pocketknife.

His interest in music came naturally. His mother could play instruments, as well as his grandfather and great-grandfather on her side. In addition, he had an uncle who liked music so well that he cleared a half-acre of land down on the river, kept it mowed, and built benches in between the willow trees. "There was a little sandy spot there where they used to land the boats. And us kids twelve, thirteen and fourteen years old, we'd get down there and play and dance and sing until three in the morning—and sometimes it would go longer than that. Dancing on the ground. He'd take wood down there and pile it up for us—always kept wood down there—and he'd build a fire and sit down there and listen to us play."

Now Dave and his sons make mandolins, guitars, fiddles (he's made nearly thirty-five and restored over 200 himself), dulcimers, and, of course, banjos of all types. At one end of the scale is the mountain banjo kit that they sell for \$35.00. The pattern for the kit came from an old mountain banjo that was much like those that Tedra Harmon and Stanley Hicks now make except that it is fretted. The kit includes instructions as well as everything that is necessary to make one yourself from the pieces of yellow poplar (all routed, marked for holes, etc.) to the fret wire, strings, tension blocks, nails, screws and the plastic head.

At the other end of the scale is the one-of-a-kind, staggeringly beautiful

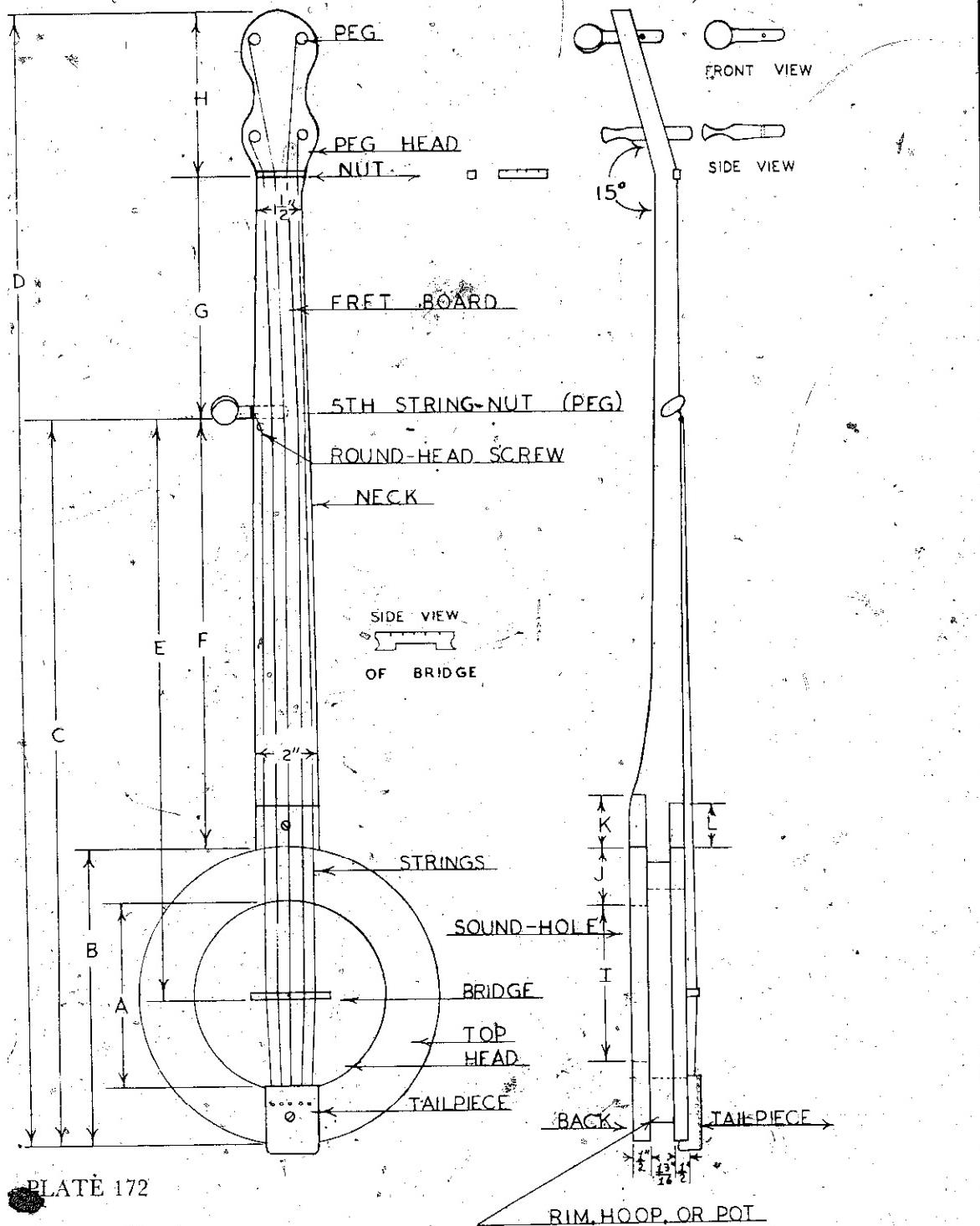
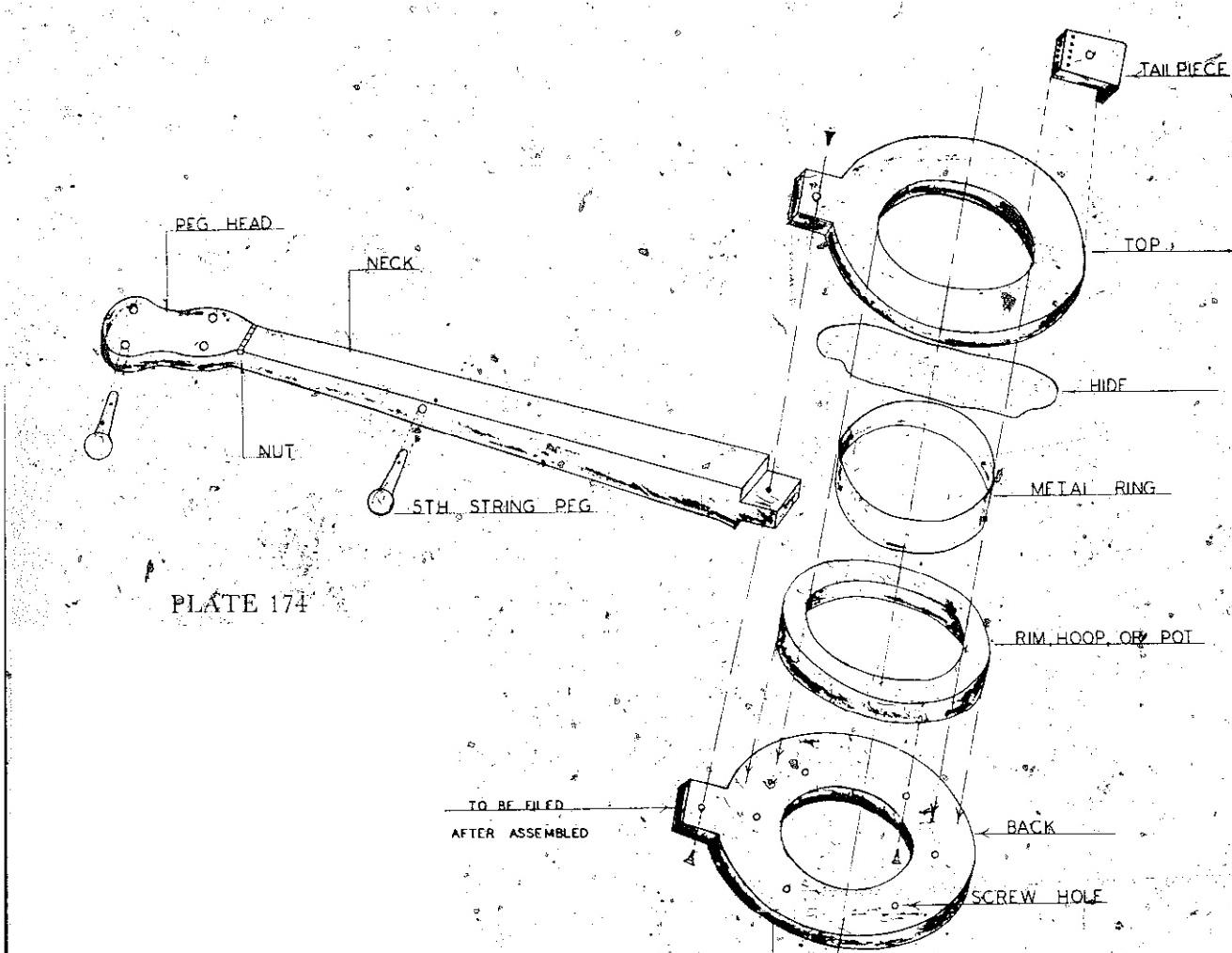


PLATE 172

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
TEDRA HARMON'S BANJO	6	9 1/2	23	36	18 1/2	13 1/2	7 1/2	5 1/2	5	2	1 3/4	1 3/8
STANLEY HICKS' BANJO	6 1/4	10 1/4	26	37	20	15 1/4	5 3/4	5 3/8	5 3/8	3 1/4	5 1/8	2 1/4

PLATE 173



custom variety that he and his sons turn out for special customers willing to pay up to \$1,500.00 for one of the finest banjos money can buy. With engravings and inlay, these instruments are works of art far too complex to detail here.

Dave has done a good bit of experimentation in his time, and has whittled his choice of materials down to a few favorites. If he were to make banjos with animal hide heads instead of commercial ones, he would prefer house-cat. He has a banjo hanging on the wall that has a cat hide in it that is forty years old and still rings well. And he has also heard of catfish skin being used, and he imagines that would also be good as it wouldn't be as subject to humidity as the other hides are.

For wood, he likes yellow poplar (his choice for the kits) because it is strong but resilient, vibrates well, and has good tone. A favorite neck of his is red oak. And for head sizes, he's found that on the mountain-style banjo, a six-inch head with a half-inch-thick top and back rings the best.

I could tell that Dave was really happy now making instruments for a living. It shows in his work, and it shows in his face.

While we were there, Dick Firney, a man Dave grew up with, came over. Both were born on the same day, January 21, 1917, and had played together since they were young. Dick uses the second guitar Dave ever made, and Dave is building him a new one now. They played for us, Dave on the banjo and Dick on the guitar.

We played the tape we made of them all the way home.

RAY MCBRIDE

Photographs by Ray and Steve Smith.

ROBERT MIZE, DULCIMER MAKER

Robert Mize was born and raised in our county, and he still has enough folks here to have good reason to make the trip down from Blountville, Tennessee, with some regularity. Nowadays, when he comes through, he stops by, and more often than not he brings along a new dulcimer or two—just finished—and either he or one of his children winds up playing it for us.

Several months ago, he stopped in as the result of a request we had sent him via one of his nieces some two years before to give us a hand putting together an article on his method of dulcimer construction. He offered to write the article for us, and we accepted.

It's an honor for us to have his directions, for he truly knows what he's doing—one of the reasons why he's a favorite craftsman member of the Southern Highlands Handicraft Guild. He's made more dulcimers than anyone we know. Each one is sequentially numbered, and as he packed up his newest one after showing it to us on his last visit, we noticed its number on the end of the box: 666.

The mountain dulcimer is an instrument whose origin is somewhat a mystery. And after having read several articles and opinions of others, I still know very little about where they come from. I believe they have always

A. COMPARISON OF STYLES:

	<u>HEAD</u>	<u>BACK</u>	<u>TOP (Hoop, Ring)</u>	<u>NECK + FRET</u>	<u>Hanging Neck / Pot</u>	<u>Bridge (Apron)</u>	<u>Neck + Bridge</u>	<u>Pegs</u>
Ernest Franklin	• "ring" = grounding or cat (coated white pot) Head on with metal ring and brass posts. Head: 11" x 18" poplar glued onto pot.	• fretless: none frets: none	• fitter: hickory split sawed round form and pegged. fret: Solid poplar sawed not, or three rings of white pine and/or poplar sand- wicched, glued together.	• fitter: 1 solid piece sawed round and shaped with a drawknife and rip. Has extension. Poplar, maple, or black walnut. Fretless. fret: 1 solid piece - no extension. Poplar. Fretless.	• fitter: 2 scars at base of extension, 1 at end through tailpiece (no glue) + metal bracket fret: 3 scars and glue.	• Dovetailed end joint with slot in back. Held with glue + one screw through back's heel fret: Top also glued onto tip of dovetailed end.	• Copper tacked with hemp	• hand carved out of hardwood. has friction pegs held carved of willow, cherry, maple or birch. Drill hole first, then whittle peg out from around it. Dislikes walnut as hard; can whittle off in time.
M.C. Worthy	Solid wood - 6" maple veneer from a furniture factory 11" diameter. Carved green granite marble for decoration.	approximately 1/2" thick piece of cedar with 3" round hole and short heel tab. Steel + 1 screw.	3. rings (each made of interlocking pieces) sand- wicched together and glued onto metal strip for decoration. Frets + woods: cherry, cedar yellow, curly maple; 13/16" thick.	• Solid piece of walnut shaped with drawknife Fretless. 25" scale.	• Dovetailed end joint with slot in heel. Held with glue + one screw through back's heel fret: Top also glued onto tip of dovetailed end.	• Any hardwood	• Any hardwood	• hand carved out of hardwood. has friction pegs held carved of willow, cherry, maple or birch. Drill hole first, then whittle peg out from around it. Dislikes walnut as hard; can whittle off in time.
Terri Harrison	Wooden ring (9 1/2" x 5") with 6" hole in center of grounding or base. Likes walnut, maple, chimney, mahogany, thin 18" x 2" long neck tab.	Wooden ring (15" x 5") with 5" round hole 1/2" heel tab. Same woods as head.	Wooden ring (8 1/4" x 3 1/2") • Hole in center slightly larger than in in head. Same woods - sometimes varied with wood in head and back for color.	• Solid piece of walnut. no extension. Also uses maple and chestnut. Fretless. 25" - 26" scale. Sometimes varies with head. works for color variation.	• Top glued to center ring and sometimes 1 screw is placed in neck tab. Back screwed onto center ring and sometimes a spot of glue in neck tab.	• Walnut	• Walnut or some other hardwood. Likes curly maple bridge.	• walnut finished page (or another hardwood).
Stanley Vick	• fitter: Wooden ring 11" in diameter w/ 6" hole of grounding or base cat. 2 1/2" long neck tab x 3/4" thick. #2: metal cedar bridge 9 1/2" in diameter. fret: Wooden ring of walnut, cherry or maple 11" in diameter w/ 6 1/2" hole for counterbalance or grounding back board. Neck tab 1 1/2" thick x 3 1/2" long and 2" wide.	• fitter: 11" diameter hardwood w/ 5" round hole. 5/8" thick. Heel tab 2 1/2" long x 3" wide. #2: Cedar ring of 9 1/2" diameter. Cedar tab w/ 4 1/2" round hole. fret: 11" diameter wood (walnut, cherry, or maple) x 3" thick x 4" round hole. Heel tab 2" long x 1" thick.	• fitter: 2 wooden rings 3/8" thick screwed together. #2: cedar box (made) fret: Walnut, cherry, or other hardwood ring 1" thick x 9 1/2" diameter with 7" hole. Also Likes chestnut.	• fitter: solid poplar with no extension. fretless. #2: poplar with extension. Fretless. fret: black walnut or other hardwood - no extension. Fretless. No glue.	• neck tab and heel tab wooden plus glue. #2: Screw into end of neck extension. fret: neck tab and heel tab screws (4 and 1). No glue.	• neck tab and heel tab wooden plus glue. #2: screw into end of neck extension. fret: neck tab and heel tab screws (4 and 1). No glue.	• fitter: #2: • neck tab and heel tab wooden plus glue.	• fitter: hardwood #2: hard wood #3: hard wood
Lorraine Glavin	Hardwood ring 9 1/2" in diameter with 6" hole of counterbalance set in. 14" long neck tab	Hardwood ring 9 1/2" in diameter w/ 3" round hole. Metal ring to hole. Heel tab 2 1/2" long.	• Likes cherry and walnut. Neck has bevelled notch to hold tip more securely. Fretless. 25 1/2" scale. 13 1/2" from thumb screw to tip of top.	• Neck tab and heel tab screws (2 each) with a little glue on tabs.	• inset neck head. Hardwood	• Hardwood	• whitewashed and fit hardwood.	

Dave
Pickett

Fret: Commercial 11" frets.
Fret: none
Fret: made by a metal band and Sustany none
metal parts and brackets.
Sustany also uses 12"
frets.
Sustany: 12" frets tucked
onto outside of the top.

Fret: 12" leg-pinned pieces
of hard wood glued together.
Likes curly maple or walnut.
Cuts 14"-15" scale, unless
sandwiched with glass or piano
magnets & finish; then
can down to 13" on guitar.
Add slotted guard.
Sustany: Hickory split
leg-joints into a circle.

Fret: solid piece without
recessions carved out
with band saw & sander.
Metal piece built up of
the frets commercial
tail to inside of bridge.
Sustany - extension
glued on. 27" scale.
Walnut or curly maple.
Sustany: 1 solid piece
with long extension.
String wrap around end
of extension; Fretless.

Fret: metal with design by
either commercial,
or fashioned to his own
design and finished
Sustany: Hardwood
Sustany: none

Fret: commercial
Sustany: Hardwood

Sustany: Hardwood

Dave
Sharpell

Fret: 6" commercial fixed set
on wooden (paper) top.
Gird by wood ring and 5
brass Hinges.
#1: Hole stretched over 10"
ring and tacked.
#2: 6" fret set with 11"
wooden top held by wood
spikes tucked to inside of the
6" hole in the top.
#3: 6" hole set with
wooden top.
#4: commercial fixed set
with wooden top.

Fret: wooden, with
some hairs drives in a
pattern.
#1: none
#2: same as last
#3: same as last
#4: same as last -
round decorative hole
to it.

Fret: 1 7/8" x 3" 3-ply
laminated hardware strip
that fits into grooves in
top and back. Nailed
with brass spikes, no glue.
#1: Hickory split leg -
extreme through hole &
string loop over tail.
#2: Wood, no tail, no
fretless.
#3: 7 1/8" in diameter
wooden ring.
#4: wooden ring

Fret: solid paper-like
tail. Has fretted
fingertab.
#1: neck tail, plus
metal rod and tail.
#2: through hole &
reinforcing block.
#3: neck tail
#4: neck tail, no
fretless.
#5: neck tail, no
fretless.
#6: neck tail, no
fretless.

Fret: 3 brass brads. String tail: wood
loop over head.
#1: wood
#2: wood
#3: wood
#4: wood
#5: wood
#6: wood
#7: wood
#8: wood
#9: wood
#10: wood
#11: wood
#12: wood
#13: wood
#14: wood
#15: wood
#16: wood
#17: wood
#18: wood
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- N.B. 1
 1. String pressure holds bridge in place excepted. Scale can be changed by sliding bridge.
 2. Resin on wooden fiddle pegs can increase friction to increase holding power in peg head.
 3. The longer the neck, the lower the pitch, and vice versa.
 4. To find foot spacing, Dave Pickett uses the following formula: measure distance from nut to bridge (scale). Then figure $17.830 \times \text{scale}$, and that gives correct distance from nut to first foot. Mark on fingerboard, subtract that answer from your scale, and work the problem again multiplying by the new scale figure. That gives spacing for next foot - etc.

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#6: whetted wood

been here in the Appalachian area. One thing I do know is how to build them. In this section, I will try to explain some of the steps and procedures used in making them. Of course, there is more to it than this, and after over six hundred, I am still learning new tricks.

There is no standard-sized or -shaped dulcimer. Every maker has the one he likes best. I use the same general pattern and vary the type of wood, or number of strings. Kentucky, Mountain, and Appalachian are all names for the plucked dulcimer, which may have any number of strings. Mountain people call them "dulcymores" or "delcymores."

The dulcimer we refer to is the plucked dulcimer and should not be confused with the hammered dulcimer, which is a forerunner of the piano. The hammered dulcimer has many strings and is played by striking the strings with small wooden hammers.

The word "dulcimer" is derived from the Latin word "dulce," and the Greek word "melos," which put together mean "sweetsong" or "sweet tune." This truly describes the dulcimer, as it is a soft-voiced, personal-type instrument which can be easily tuned to the range of your voice. This makes the dulcimer a natural for playing hymns, ballads, and folk songs. Like the five-string banjo, it seems to be an authentic American musical instrument.

I was born and raised in Clayton, Rabun County, Georgia, and never saw nor heard of the dulcimer until the late 1940s. Some of the craftsmen of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild began making them, using old ones for patterns. Their popularity has been growing ever since, especially in the last few years, with the revival of the folk music and handicrafts. I don't know if anyone owned or knew of dulcimers in Rabun County before this time.

Many different woods may be used. I make a combination of wormy chestnut, butternut, gum or sassafras for the top, and all other parts from black walnut. I also make them using cherry for all parts, or curly maple. Bird's-eye, or highly figured maple, is very difficult to work. It is also heavy.

The combination of a hardwood on back and sides, with softer wood for top, gives a good mellow sound, and the contrast of two woods is pleasing to see. Cherry on back and sides, and California redwood on top will make a soft tone. Butternut and walnut are also good. I use a lot of wormy chestnut with walnut. The color, grain, and worm holes make a nice looking top, and also a good tone.

Different woods will affect the tone of the instrument somewhat, although the size and shape of the sound holes have very little effect, except for looks. I use an "F" shape, like in a violin, for most of mine: but I do make heart, diamond, or other shapes when requested to do so.

I have used many different woods, such as apple, red elm, oak, sourwood,



PLATE 176

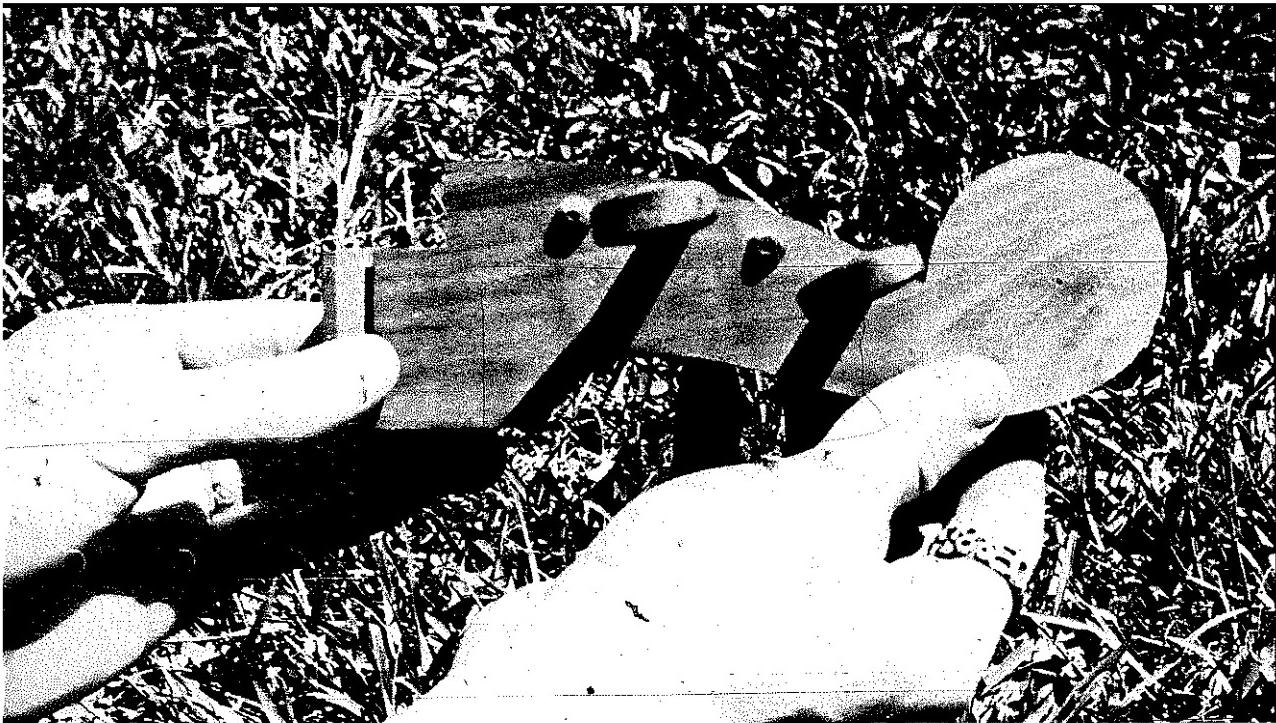


PLATE 177

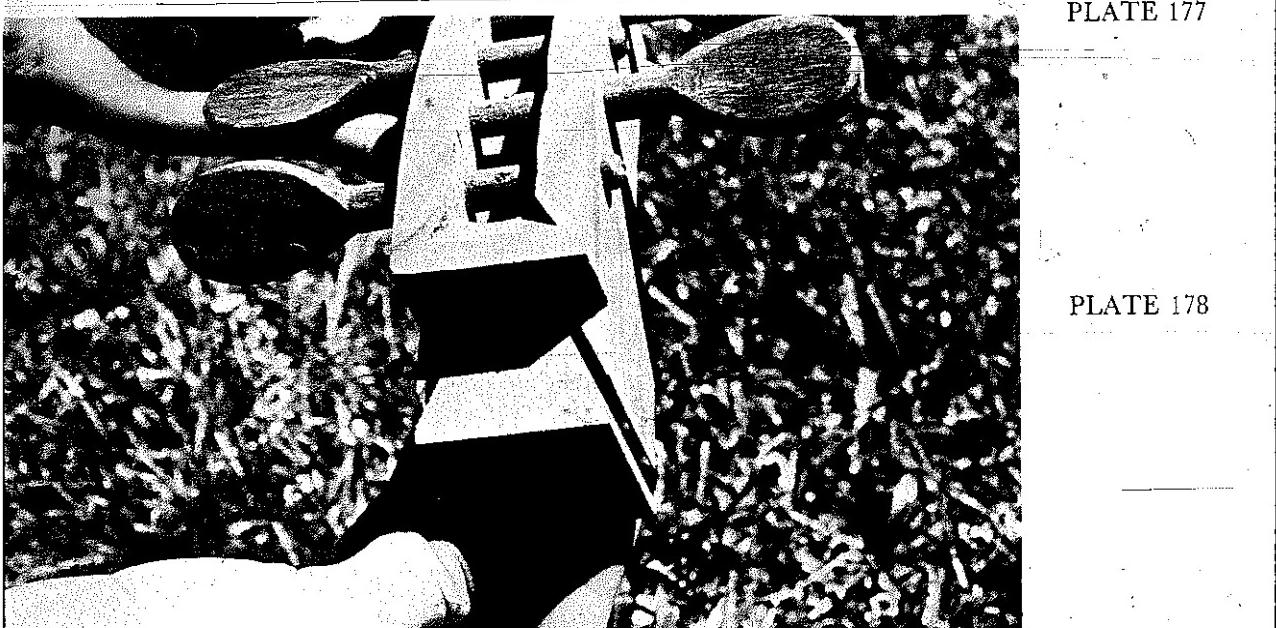


PLATE 178

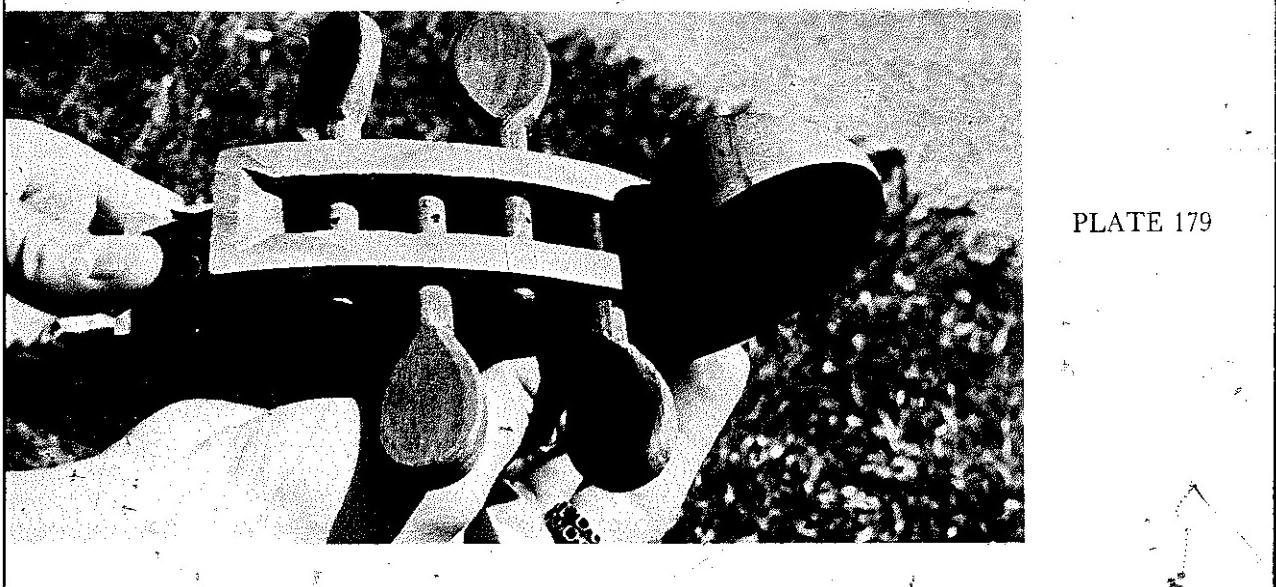


PLATE 179

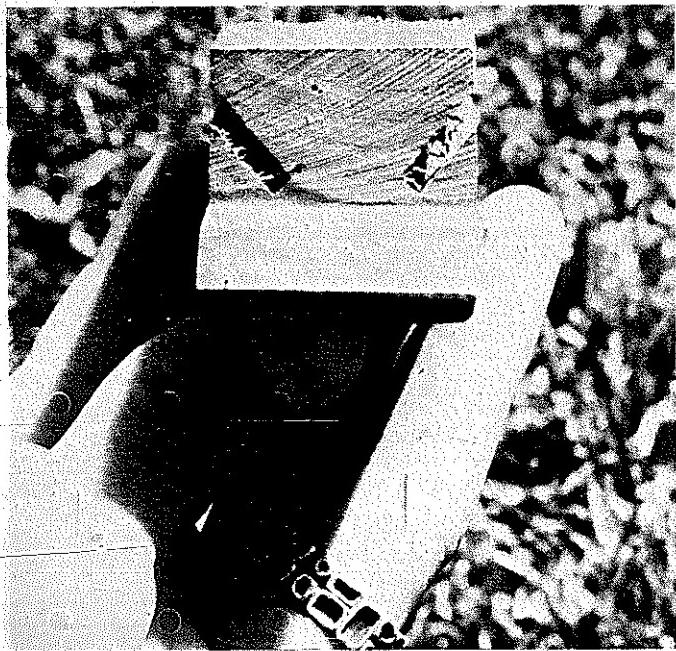


PLATE 180

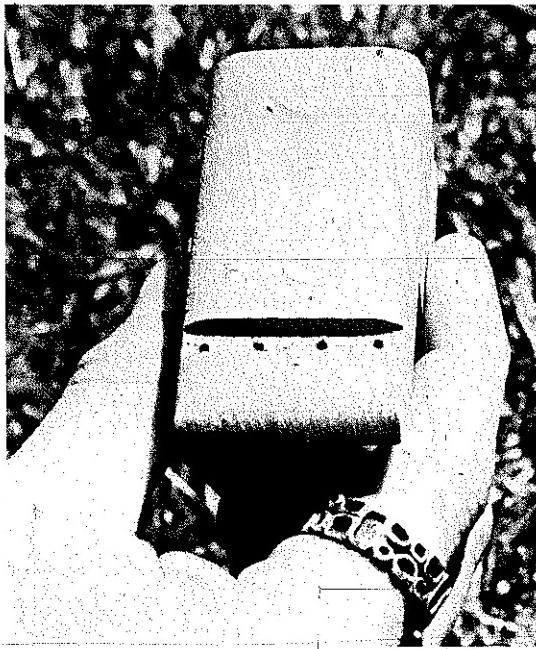


PLATE 181

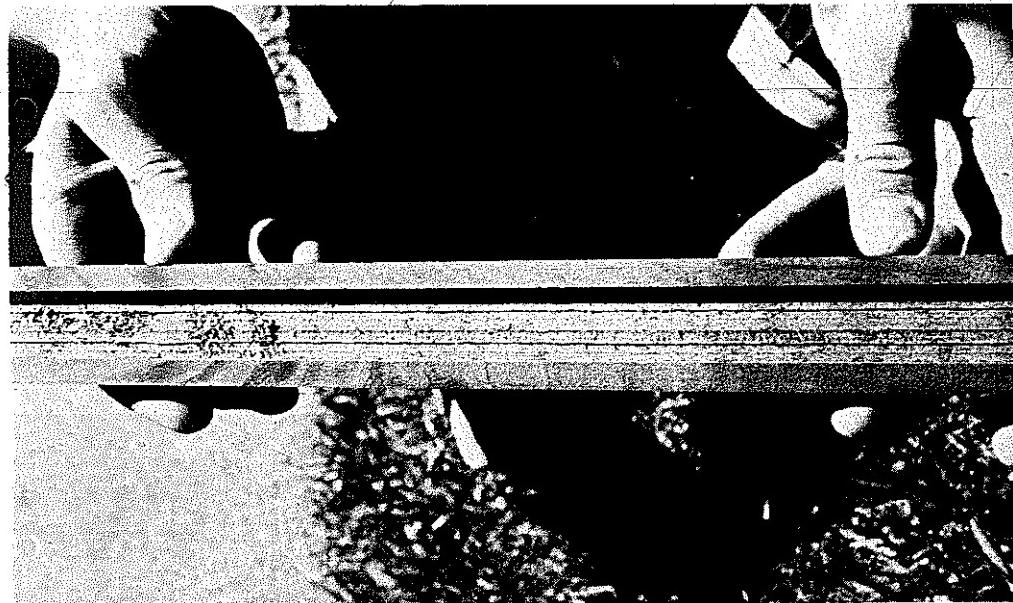


PLATE 182

gum, pecan, cedar, beech, birch, sassafras, chestnut, butternut, walnut, cherry, maple, and others. Most of these were only to see what they would look and sound like. If you stick with black walnut for the back, and butternut, gum, chestnut, or poplar on top, you can get good results. Curly poplar of the deep purple color makes an exceptional dulcimer. The wood is not as important as the construction, and each instrument should be better than the last.

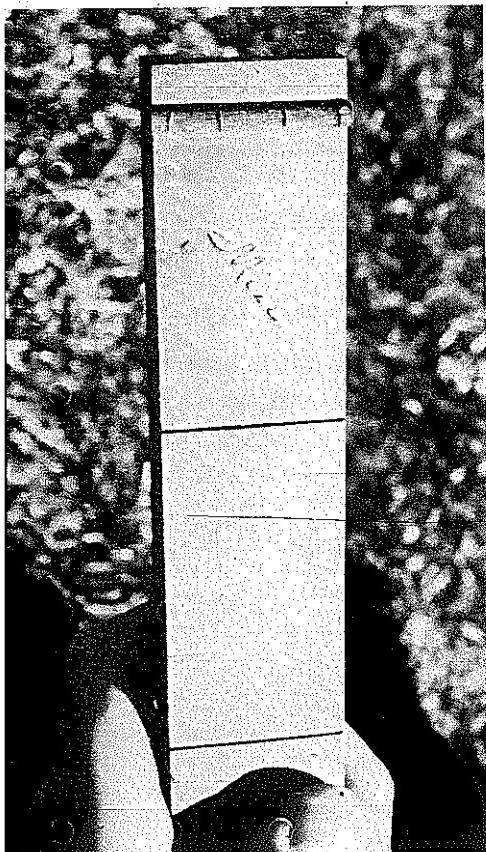


PLATE 183

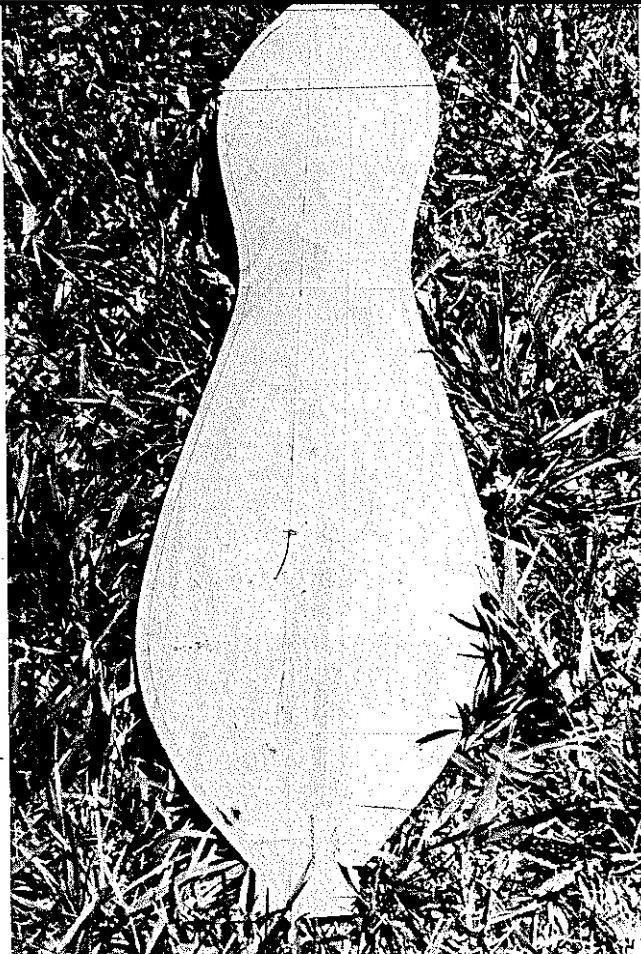
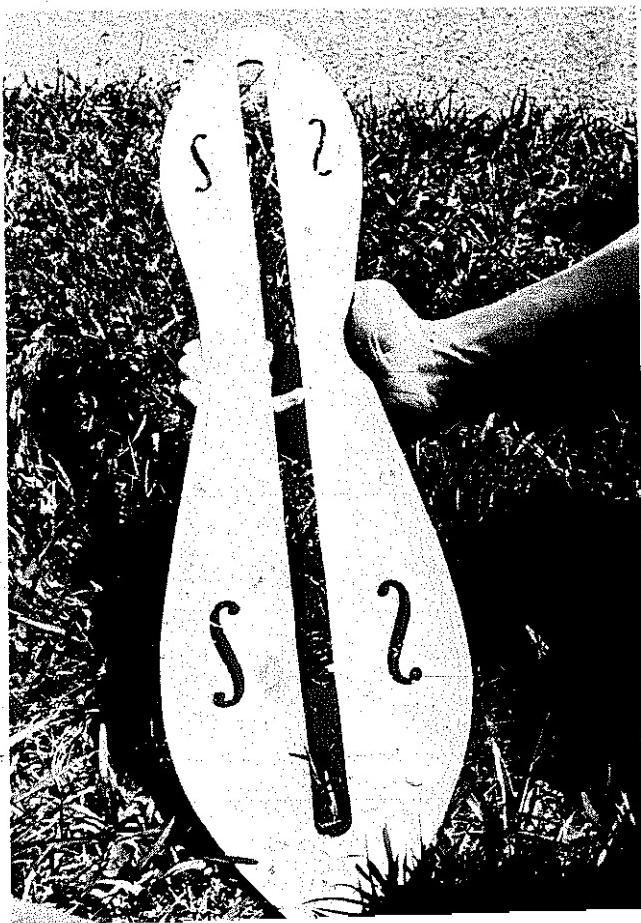


PLATE 184

PLATE 185



BANJOS AND DULCIMERS

193

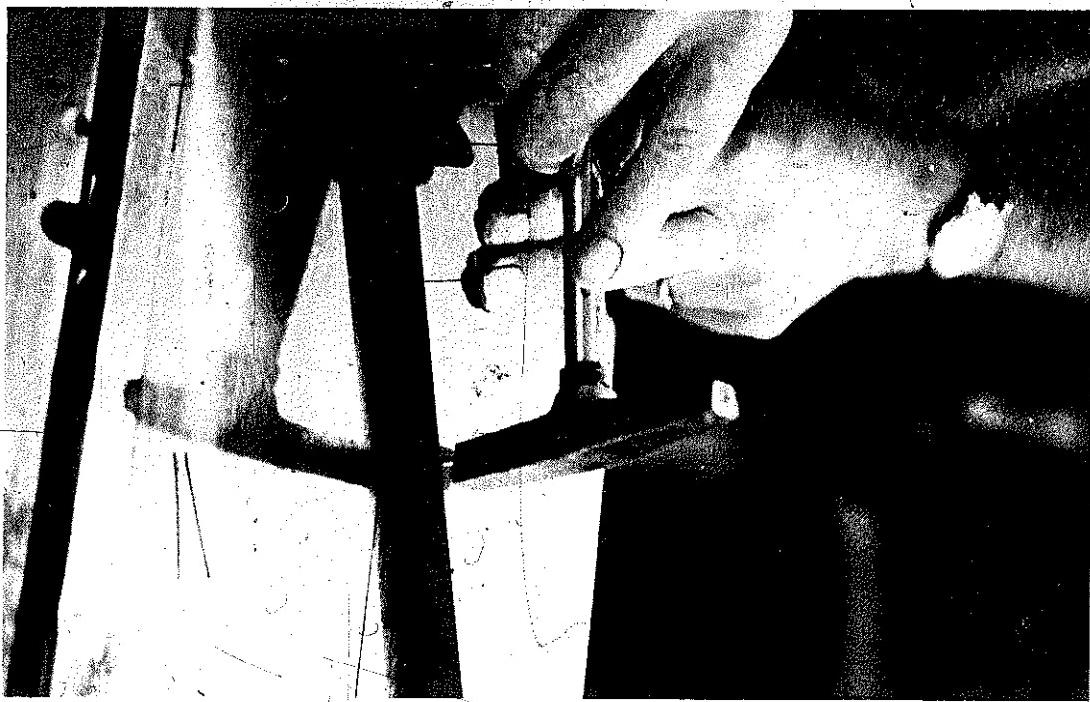


PLATE 186



PLATE 187

The dulcimers I make for sale are made as nearly like the old traditional ones as I can get them. No fancy inlays of exotic woods, no veneers or plywood, just good, dry wood like that used by the early craftsmen. I do not use metal guitar-tuning keys, but make wooden keys from Brazilian rosewood. I use modern techniques, glue, and finishes.

All wood used should be kiln-dried unless you are sure it is thoroughly air-dried, to control shrinking and cracking in low humidity. As we cannot control the environment around the dulcimer, we try to protect the dulcimer from the extremes of humidity. Our modern homes get very dry in the wintertime and air conditioning keeps the humidity low the rest of the time.

I apply two heavy coats of sanding sealer lacquer, then two coats of finish lacquer, hand rub with steel wool after each coat of lacquer, and wax with a good paste furniture wax. A dulcimer must be a good musical instrument, and if it looks good also, so much the better, but musical quality comes first.

I will describe and make a four-string dulcimer of wormy chestnut and black walnut, in the shape generally known as the elongated hour glass. We will make all parts, rough sand, assemble the parts, trim, finish sand, apply the finish, hand rub, wax, string, tune up, and, hopefully, play.

THE PEG HEAD

As this is to be a four-string dulcimer, we will select a piece of black walnut 8" long \times 1½" wide \times 2½" thick. The shape of the peg head is traced on the side, and the shape of the peg box is traced on the top. The peg box is 5/8" wide and about 7/8" deep, and long enough to accommodate four tuning pegs (*Plate 177*). To make a five- or six-string dulcimer, just make the peg head and peg box a little longer to get the extra pegs in there. I drill part of the peg box with a 5/8" drill, then finish cutting to shape with a chisel. Once the peg box is finished, saw slots in the end to receive the sides and cut the notch for top and fret board (*Plates 178, 179*). Cut the peg head to shape last, so you will have straight and square surfaces to cut notches and slots accurately (see diagram on page 206).

THE PEG END

The peg end is also made of walnut, the same width as the peg head. The length of the slots, where sides fit, must be the same as those of the peg head, as this determines the depth of the sound box. Cut slots for the sides

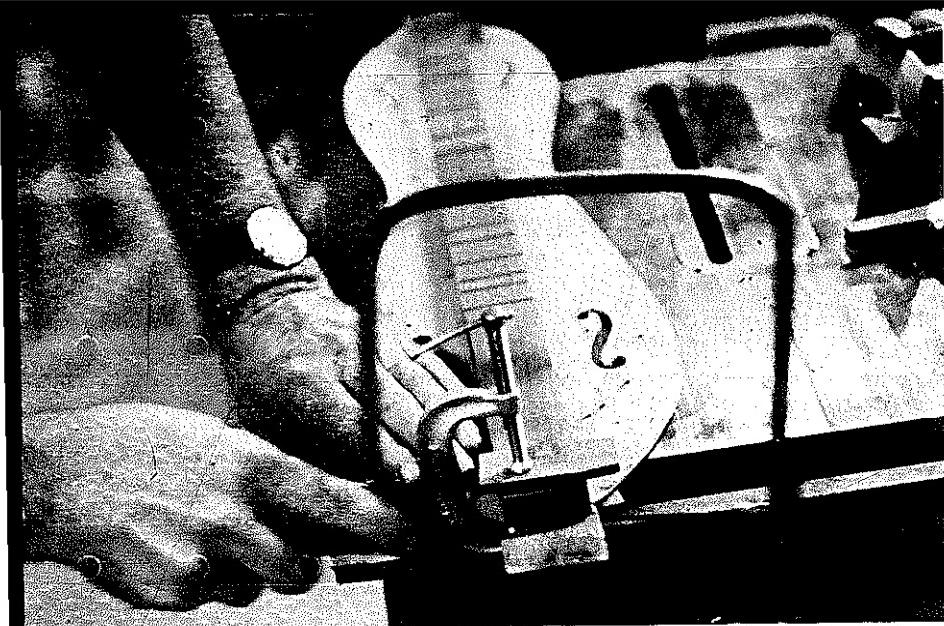


PLATE 188

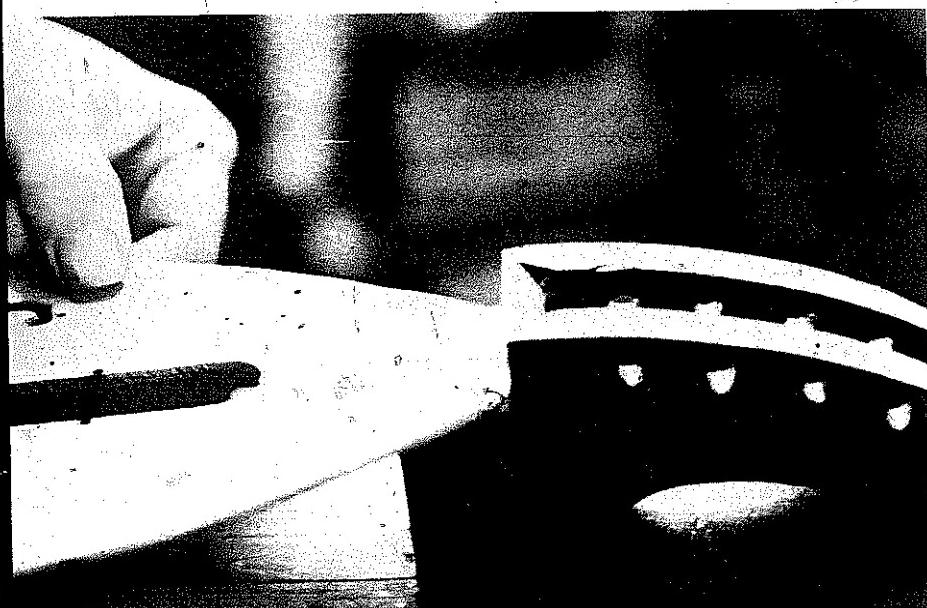


PLATE 189

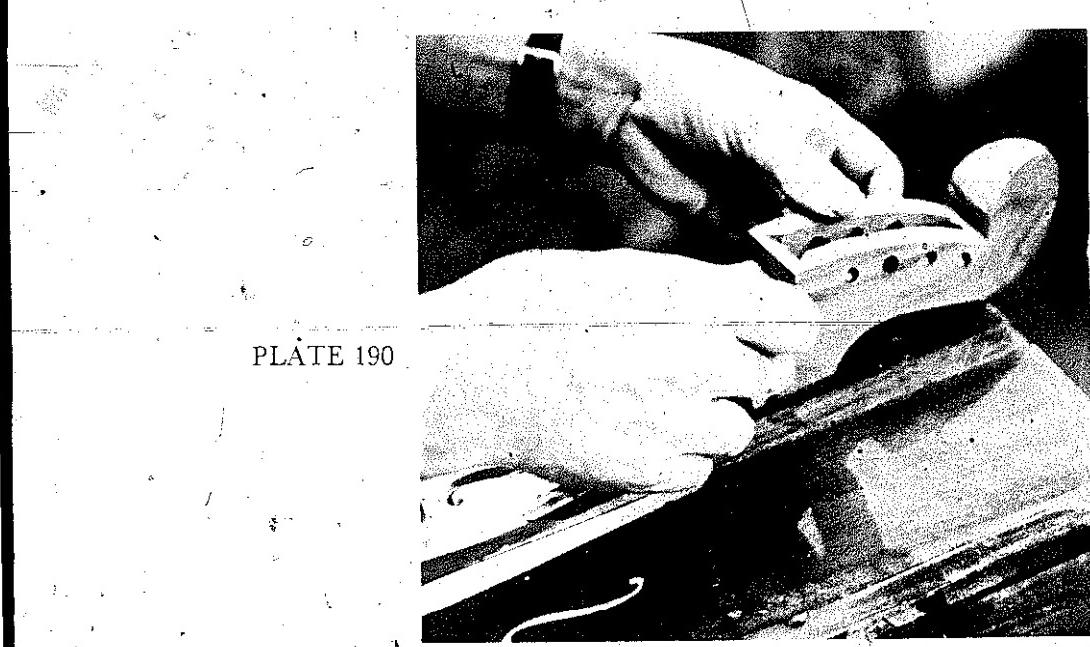


PLATE 190

(Plate 180), a notch for the top and fret board, and cut a notch on the back side for strings (Plate 181).

I have tried to lay out each step or saw cut in the proper order to give you better control for safety and accuracy, so please follow these steps. You may wind up with a difficult cut to make and no safe way to do it. You should then start over with that part and do it again.

THE FRET OR FINGER BOARD

This piece is the most important and critical of all the pieces. The distance from the string nut, near the peg head, to the bridge on the other end, must be exact. The frets must be placed exactly at the right place, or the notes will not be true. This distance or spacing of frets can be figured mathematically, although I do not know the formula. I have a master pattern of a fret board which was given to me by a master dulcimer maker. I go by this, and am most particular about its construction. The quality of the fret board determines the quality of music of the finished dulcimer. A beautiful dulcimer with a poor fret board makes an expensive wall decoration, as that is all it is good for. Remove some of the wood from the inside of the fret board, or hollow it out, to make the sound from the frets and string pass more easily to the sound box (Plate 182).

Keep the top of the fret board perfectly flat from one end to the other. If it is not flat, when you press the strings down on a fret, the string will touch the next fret also. This will deaden some of the sound and make the string buzz. Be sure the frets are seated solidly in their slots; raise the bridge a little, or even file a high spot off the fret to stop the buzzing. Sometimes it becomes necessary to remove all the frets, scrape and sand the fret board straight, and replace the frets to get it to play again.

Use regular guitar frets from a music store, cut to the proper length. Make saw slots with a thin coping saw. Make a saw slot in scrap wood, and file down the side of the blade until you get a thin slot that is a nice tight fit for the fret (Plate 183). Again, take care in making the fret board, as this is the most important part of a dulcimer (see Plate 209).

THE BACK

Take a piece of black walnut $3\frac{1}{2}$ " wide \times 30" long \times about 1" thick. Try to find one with as much grain or figure as possible, as we will bookmatch two pieces to get a nice design on the back. Run this blank across a jointer or planer to get one surface smooth and flat. Square both of the edges. Make a pencil mark on one edge at a slant. By lining up these marks, you can arrange the cut pieces in the same position as they

were in the original board. Set the rip fence on a bench saw for a $\frac{1}{8}$ " cut. Place the blank on edge and cut two $\frac{1}{8}$ " pieces. By using the pencil marks, get these two pieces in the same position as they were cut, then open them up like a book. Note the pattern of the grain. If it's not the best, close the "book" and turn it over and open it again. Always look at the inside of the book, as these two surfaces are the only ones that will match. Now joint and edge glue these pieces together. This is called "book-matching" or a mirror image. Reinforce this glue joint on the inside with thin pieces of wood, with the grain direction 90° from the glue joint. This should give you a piece of wood $7" \times 30" \times \frac{1}{8}"$ from which the back is made.

THE TOP

Select a piece of chestnut or whatever you wish to use and cut and glue a $7" \times 30" \times \frac{1}{8}"$ piece as you did for the back. Place the top blank on the bottom with the two bookmatched sides on the outside. Trace the shape and saw these pieces together. By keeping the top and bottom in the same position as they were cut, you do not have to worry about the contour of both sides being the same, as the top and bottom will match. Sand the inside and outside of these parts. Cut a slot in the top under the fret board (*Plates 184, 185*). Also, fix the position where sound holes are to be cut in the top. Make a pattern from paper or a thin, flat piece of plastic, cut the shape you want, place it on the top, and draw the design. Use a jig saw or coping saw: drill holes in the top, insert the blade through this hole, and cut the sound hole to the traced shape. Take care in cutting these holes. Finish the shape with a sharp knife. Get the shape of the sound hole right, as it is going to be on the top of the dulcimer and it is always the first thing noticed if it is not right.

The sides are cut from the same wood as the back. Start with a piece $30"$ long and a little wider than the slots in the peg head and peg end. Dress this piece on a jointer to get it smooth. Slice a thin piece off with a bench saw—a little under $\frac{1}{16}$ "—so it's flexible. Dress down the blank, and saw another side. Make three or four sides, always dressing down the thick blank, as the cut sides are too thin to dress on a machine. We now have all the major parts made and can start assembly.

ASSEMBLY

Clasp the top and bottom together as they will be later. True them up, then trim, sand, and finish the edges. Round off the sharp, square edges. Do all the sanding of the parts before putting them together, as it is easier

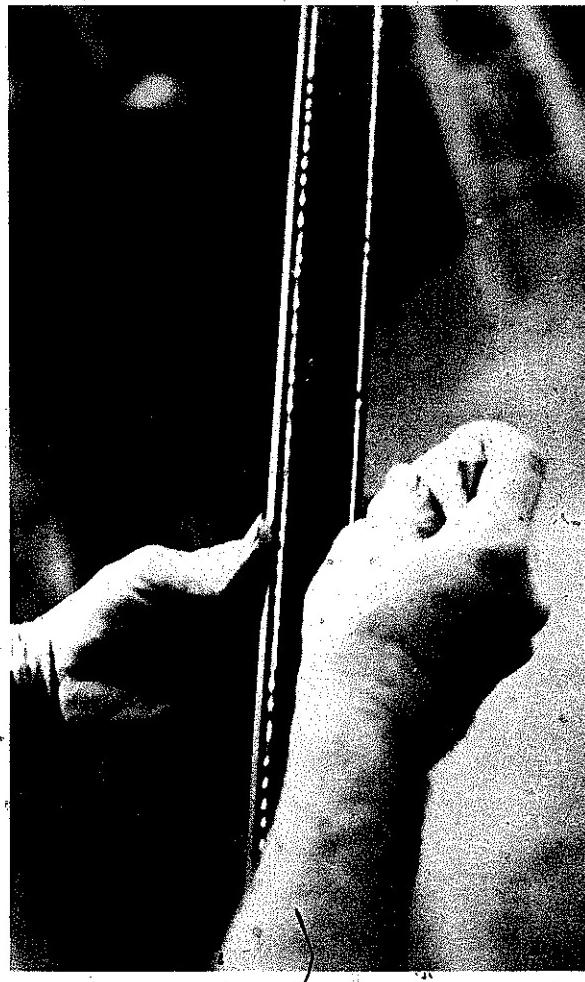
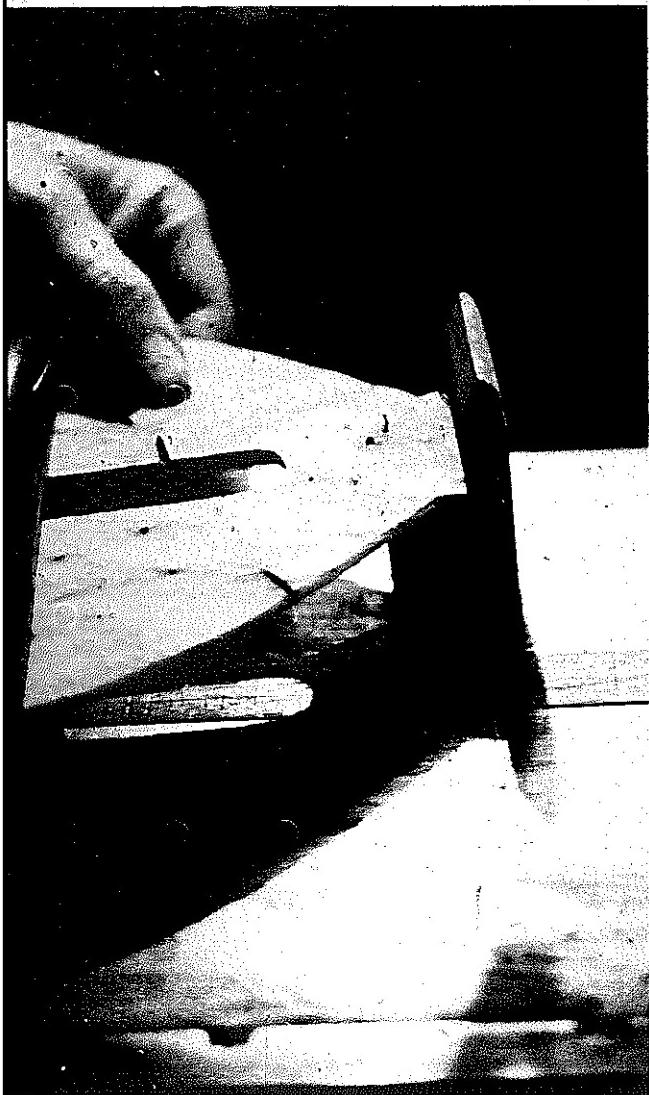


PLATE 191

PLATE 192

to get at some pieces. Leave only a light final sanding for the end of the process.

Be very careful from now on, as you are building an instrument you want to be proud of. Keep everything clean; work on a soft rag. A bad scratch or a mistake is hard to overcome at this stage. Remove all excess glue now, or at least mark around a glue spot for removal later. If the glue is not removed, it will make a light or white spot in the finish.

Cut the frets to length, fasten them in the fret board, file and putty the holes, and finish the fret board now (*Plates 186, 187*).

Place the completed fret board on the top at the proper place and cut the top to the exact length of the fret board (*Plate 188*). Glue the peg head and peg end on the underside of the top (*Plates 189-191*). Apply glue

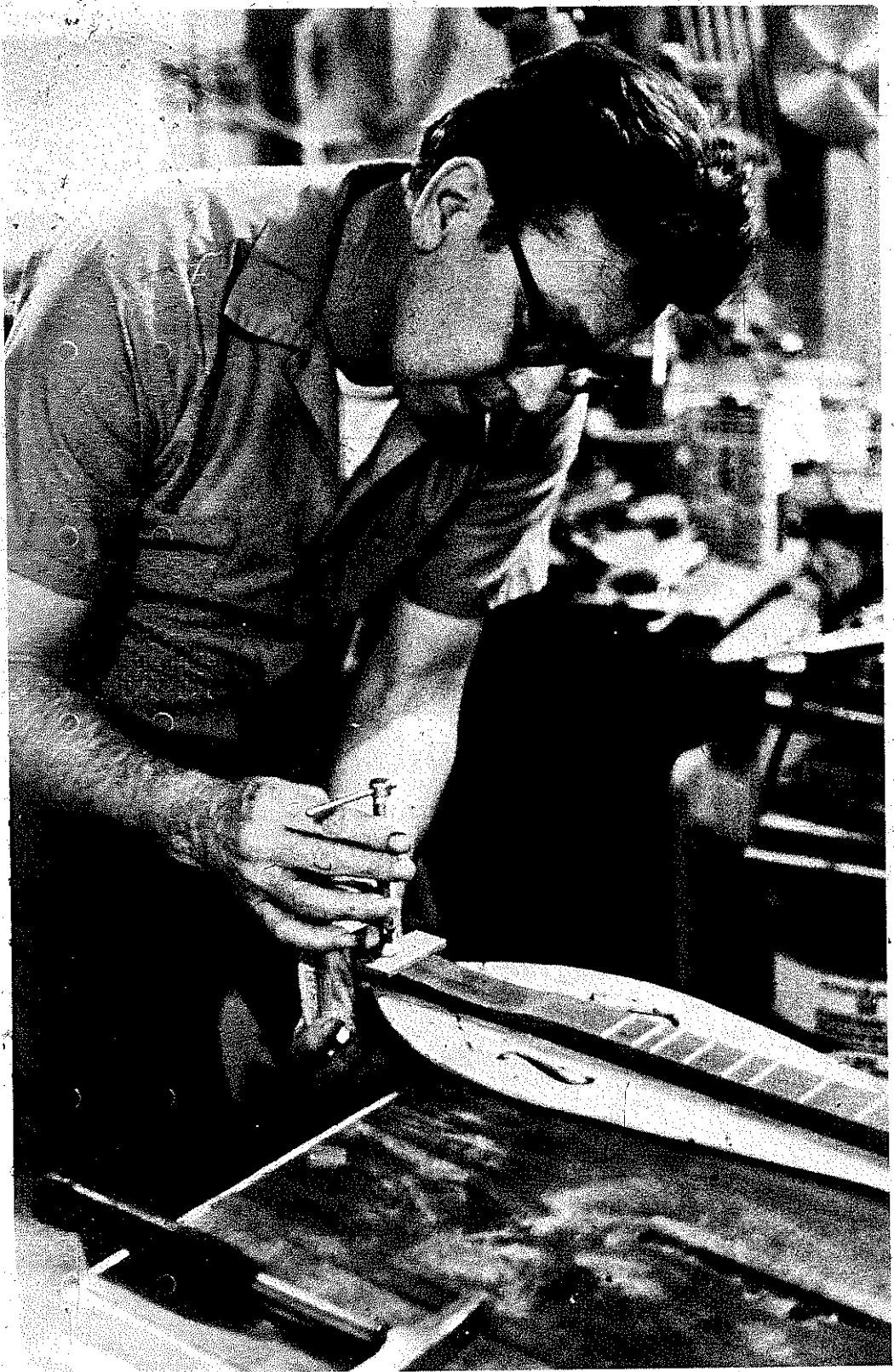


PLATE 193



PLATE 194



PLATE 195



PLATE 196



PLATE 197



PLATE 198



PLATE 199

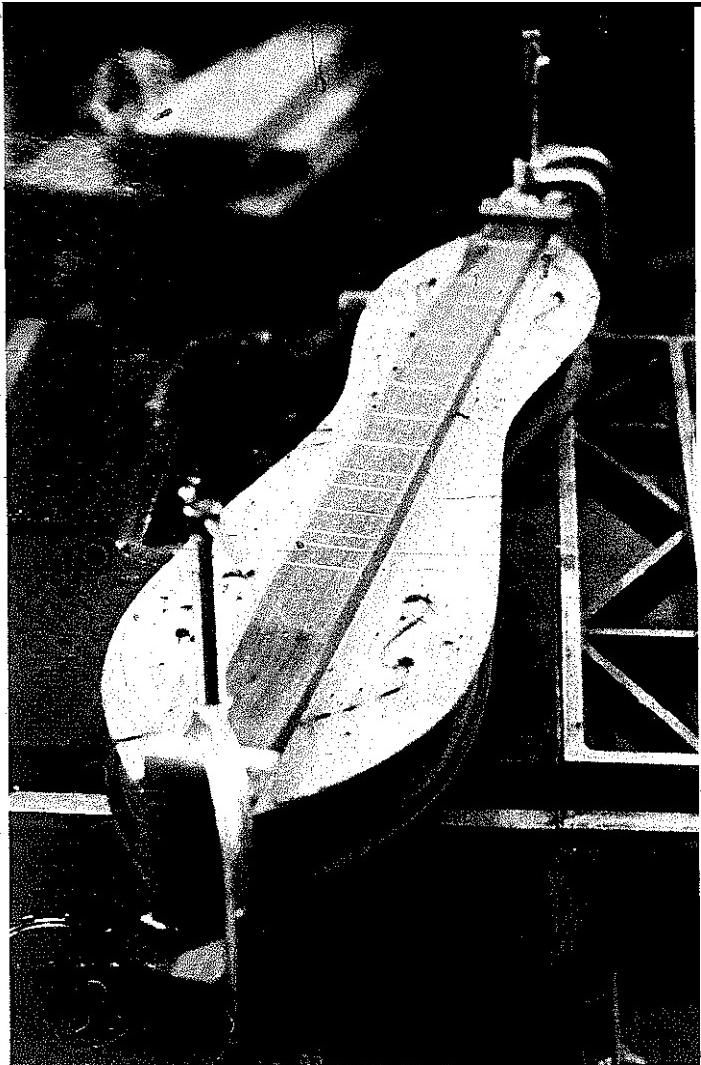


PLATE 200



PLATE 201

BANJOS AND DULCIMERS

203

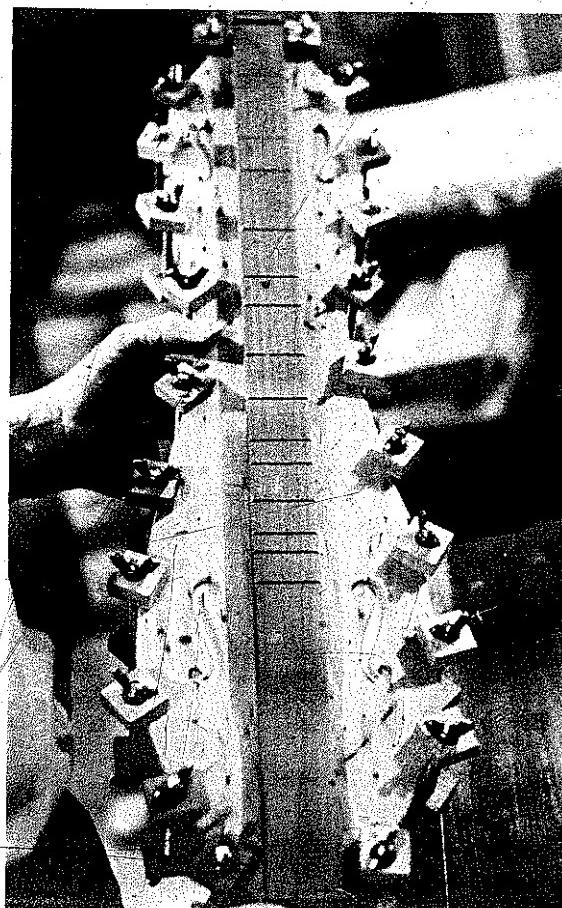


PLATE 202

PLATE 203



PLATE 204



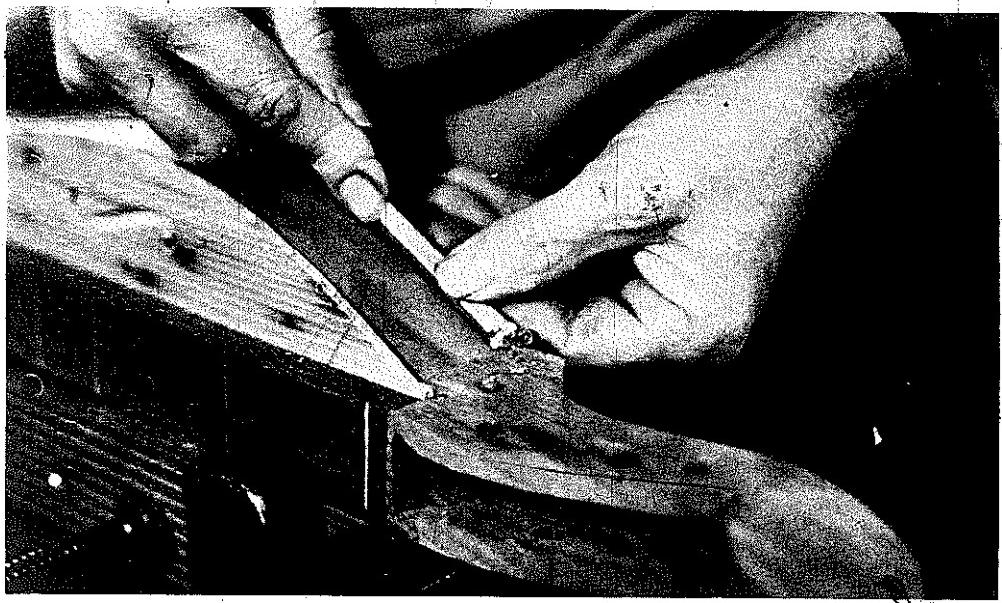


PLATE 205

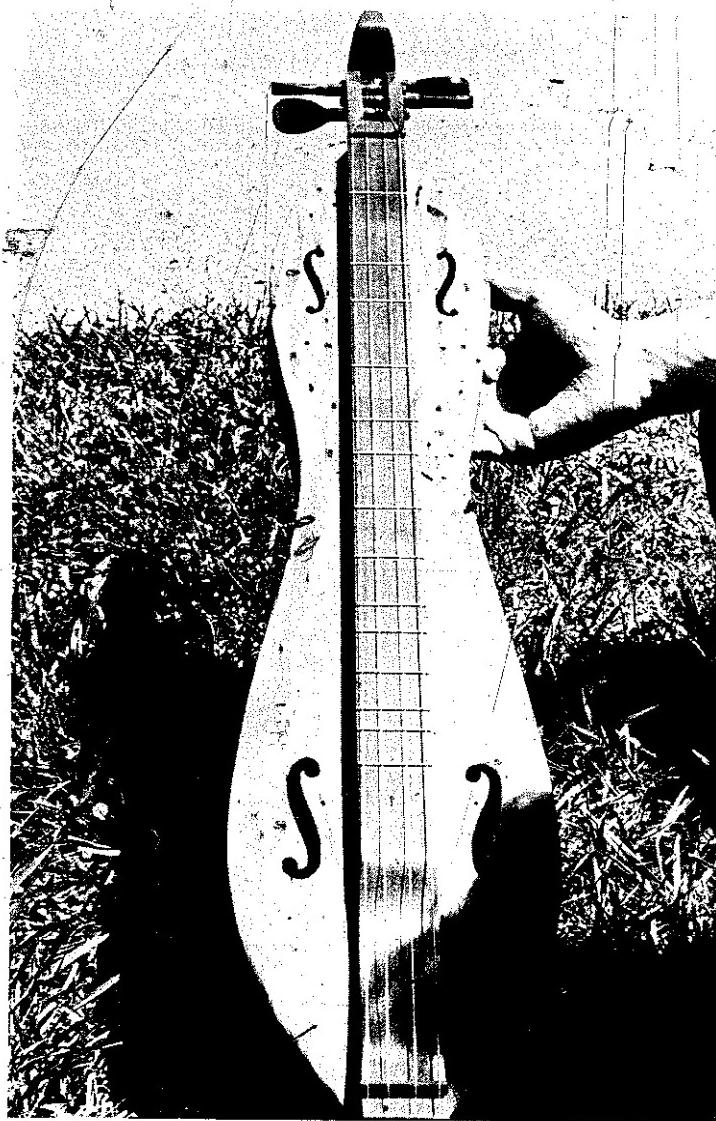


PLATE 206

to the fret board (*Plate 192*), and clamp it on the top (*Plate 193*). Use small brads ($\frac{1}{2} \times 20$ brads) to fasten the top and fret board and allow the glue to set. Any good wood glue will do if you give it enough time for curing, and remove any excess glue carefully.

Place the top on the inside of the back and mark the position where the peg head and peg end are to be attached. On the inside of the top and bottom, draw a mark from end to end about $\frac{3}{16}$ " in from the sides (*Plate 194*). Make four glue strips about $\frac{3}{8}$ " square, with closely spaced saw notches cut in one side (*Plate 195*). Glue these flexible strips on the inside of the marks of the top and bottom (*Plates 196-199*). The sides are glued to them later.

Glue the top and bottom together and let the glue set (*Plate 200*). Cut the sides to the proper length and width, and pre-bend them by holding the back side to a source of heat and bending by hand (*Plates 201-202*). Use just a little heat, as too much will make the side brittle.

Glue the sides in place (*Plates 203, 204*).

Trim, sand, and stain if needed (*Plate 205*). Take a lot of time and get everything just right now. There are a number of ways to do the finish, depending on the amount of gloss you desire.

Lacquer, varnish, urethane, or shellac, with sanding and steel wool rubbing between coats is good. You can use only wax, or some of the penetrating oil finishes will give a flat finish. When I build in volume, I spray on the lacquer and then wax by hand.

A standard violin peg hole taper or reamer is used to taper the holes in the peg head. This tool can be found in some music stores or at a musical instrument repair shop. You can use large violin or viola pegs or make your own of rosewood or other hardwood.

Make the string nut and bridge, glue it in place, and bore the holes for the strings in the peg end and pegs.

For the first three strings (nearest you), use an E or first guitar string, ball end. For the fourth string, use a G or third guitar string, ball end. This is a wound string and is the bass string of the dulcimer. If you use banjo strings, use two first strings, one third string, and one fourth string, which is the bass.

Tune the first and second strings to G, below Middle C, on a piano. Tune the third string to Middle C, and tune the fourth string to C, one octave below Middle C, on a piano. This is a major tuning. Pick the melody by noting the first string only. Strum the other three strings; they are the drone strings and make the same tone all the time.

Making a dulcimer is not an easy job. You will have to make some of your tools and clamps. You will also have to figure out for yourself how to do

On this page, Robert Mize has been generous enough to share with us the crucial patterns for the dulcimer he makes. They are reproduced here actual size - they have not been reduced at all. Cut apart the three pieces of the pattern, and join them at the dotted lines (put line "A" against line "A", line "B" against line "B"). Mark off the frets exactly as they are here, or the dulcimer will not note properly. The fret spacing is the only crucial part of the instrument. Design the rest to suit yourself...

Peghead or Pegbox:

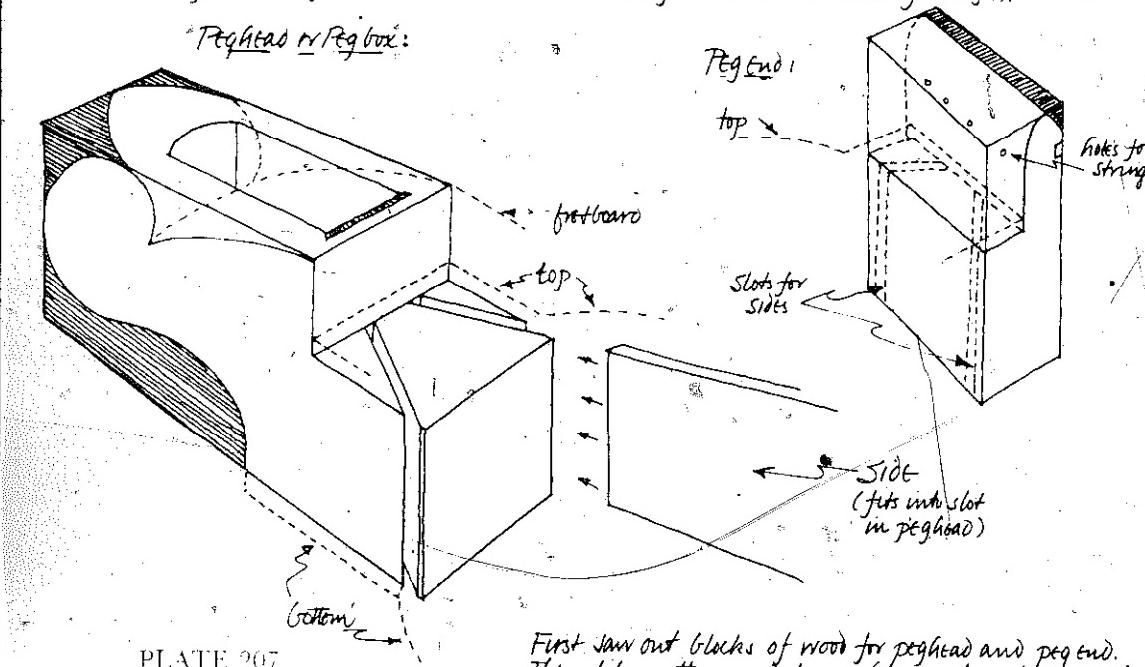


PLATE 207

First saw out blocks of wood for peghead and peg end. Then take pattern and trace shapes out on top and sides. Then cut notches for top and fretboard, slots for sides, and hole in peghead for pegs. Then cut out shape (curves, etc.) and finish the pieces. Then add bottom, sides, top, fretboard etc as per instructions in magazine article.

PLATES 207-209 illustrate the plans for a Robert Mize dulcimer which appeared actual size in an insert in *Foxfire* magazine. Space has forced us to reduce this insert; but a copy of the original may be ordered from *Foxfire* for \$1.

certain steps. Take plenty of time and think out each step as you go along. Do not worry about getting all the dimensions the same as those I have given here; the only thing that must be exact is the finger or fret board. Make the rest to suit yourself.

ROBERT MIZE

Photographs by Warren Gaskill.

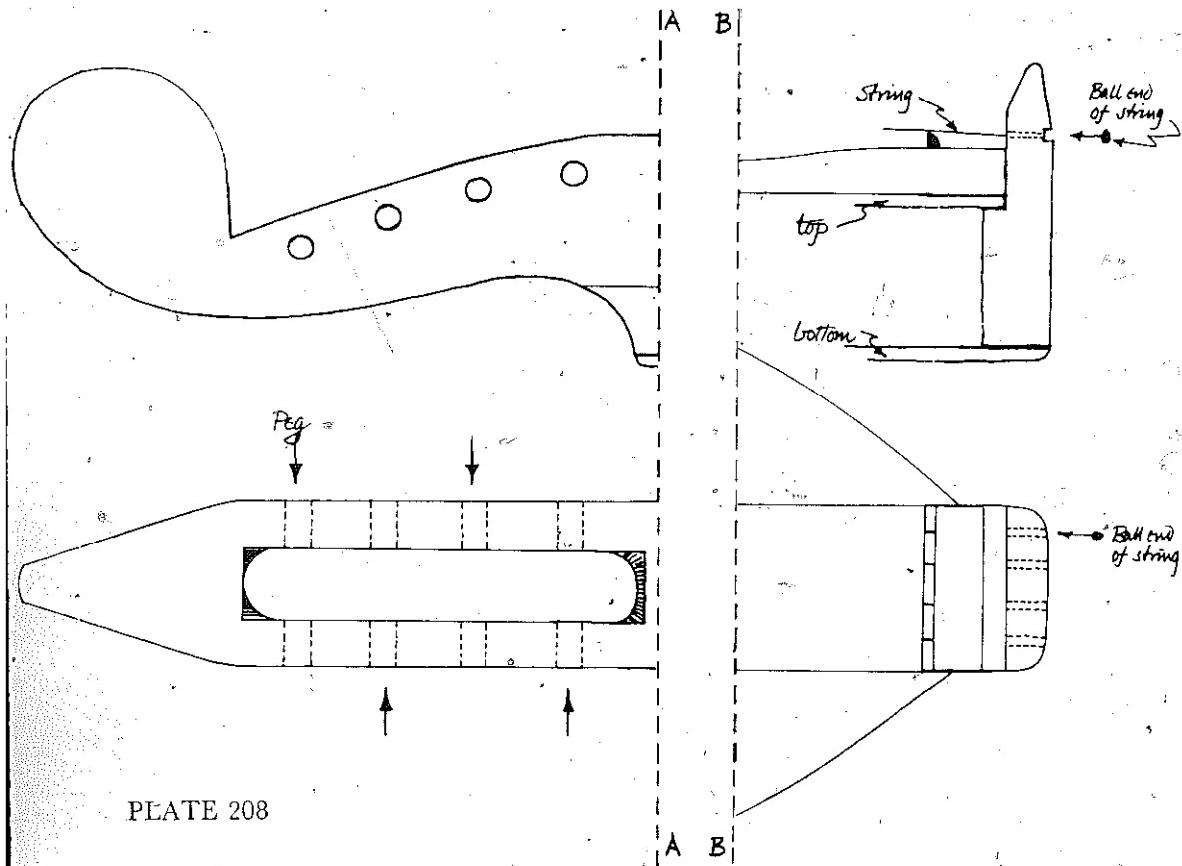


PLATE 208

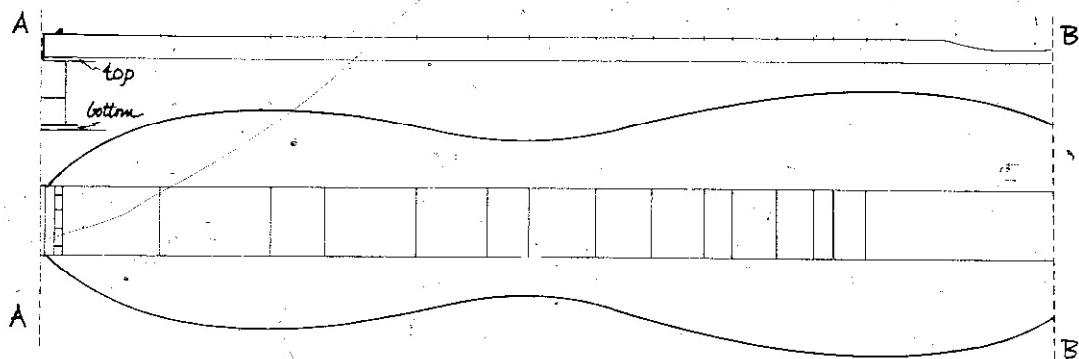


PLATE 209

PURPLE MARTIN GOURDS

People in years back put up martin houses to entice the martins to stay on their place during the summer to chase off chicken hawks. Bryant McClure told us: "My mother had purple martins long ago and they were not for catching insects, but to keep the hawks away from the chickens. They'll fight them. They'll fight a crow. If a hawk comes around, these purple martins will gang up on him. They'll chase him out of the country."

The primary reason people erect purple martin gourds or apartments now is to keep flying insects away from their gardens and from around the house. People who have them say they can sit outside late in the evening in the summer and not be bothered by mosquitoes or gnats.

Lester Davis says, "I guess the martins help me a lot because they eat all the bugs and insects. Martins will cover a large area eating insects, mostly mosquitoes. They'll be up in the elements all day long until nearly sundown. You can see them dive like a jet airplane. A lot of people like martins, especially around ponds."

To prepare a gourd for a martin house, a large round gourd with a short neck should be used. A round hole, two inches in diameter, should be made in the side of the gourd. Then small holes should be drilled in the bottom so that rain water will drain out. Drill two small holes through the neck of the gourd for a wire to be run through to hang the gourd by.

Mr. McClure told us how he got started with his martin houses. "When I decided I wanted to get purple martins, I bought an expensive setup—apartments, aluminum pole, and all that. I guess for two years I didn't get a martin. Two came and sat on the little deck, but flew away and never came back. I asked Bob Hooper what went wrong, and he said, 'You've got to have gourds.' Gourds must be their natural houses. I got gourds. I sent to Georgia and paid seventy-five cents apiece for them. I put them up, and the next year I got martins."

PURPLE MARTIN GOURDS

209

Articles needed:

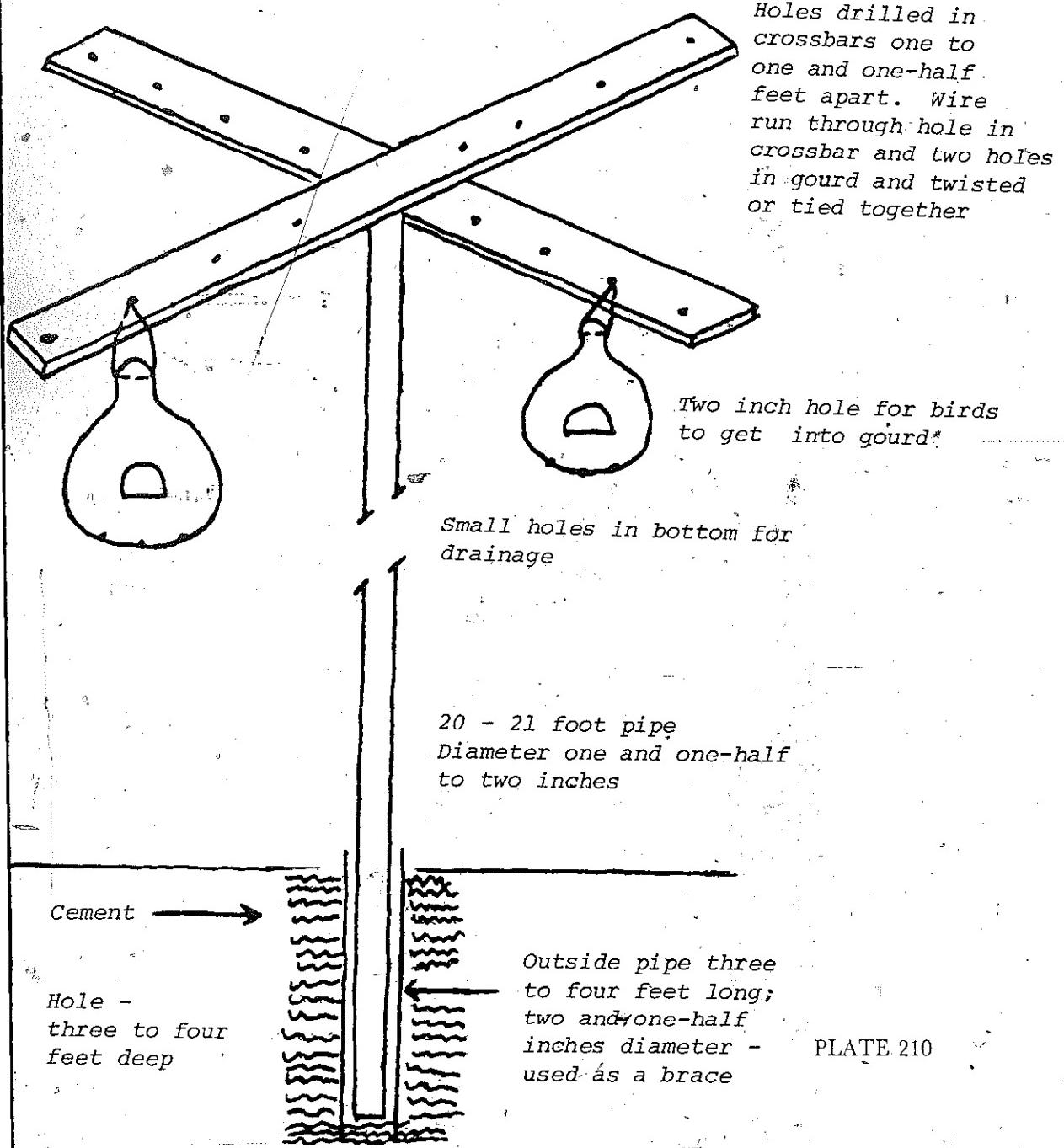
One galvanized pipe - 20-21 feet long; one and one-half to two inch diameter

One galvanized pipe - 3¹/₂ feet long; two to two and one-half inch diameter

Two crossarms - 2x4; seven to eight feet long.

Ten to twenty gourds

Bag of cement



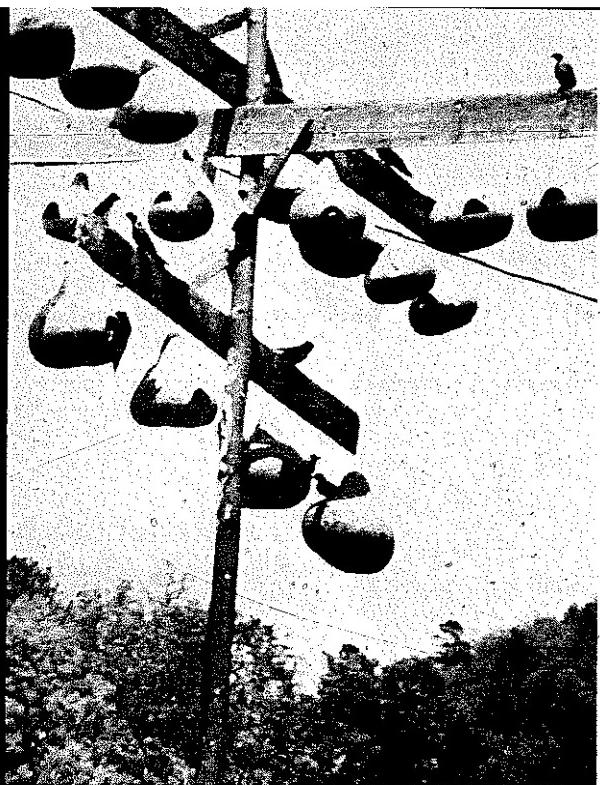


PLATE 211



PLATE 212



PLATE 213

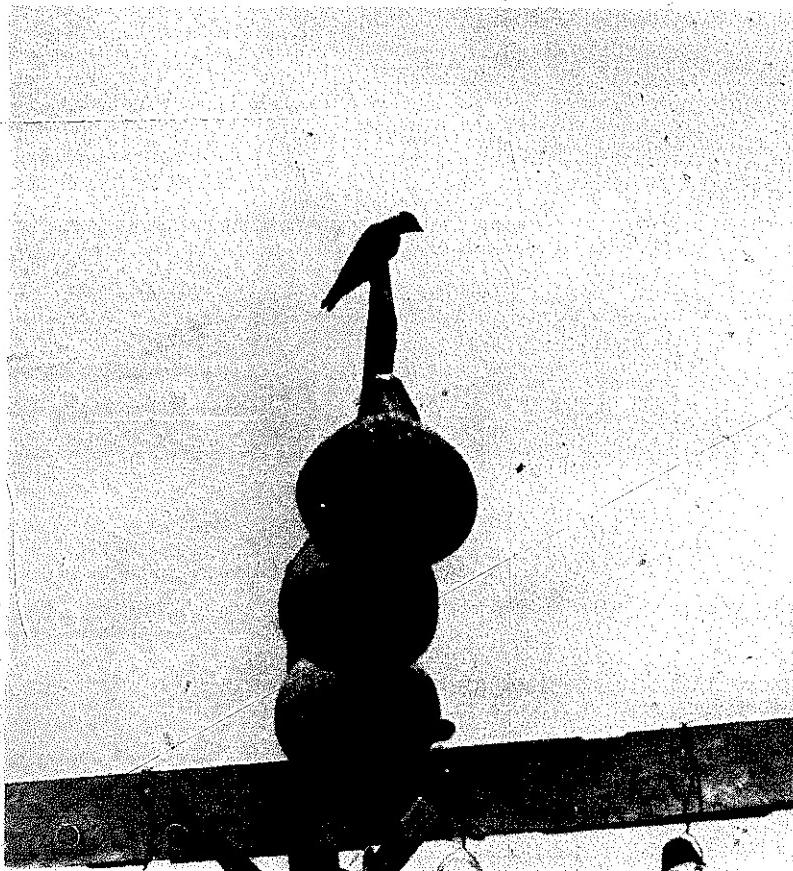


PLATE 214

Mr. Davis told us that he raised his own gourds. Ask for seeds for martin gourds. [NOTE: We have recently received word that seed companies like George W. Park Seed Company, Inc., and Hastings Seed Company sell not only dipper gourd seed, but also a special variety ideal for martin houses.] "I don't have any trouble. I like to plant my gourds in fairly rich soil where they'll grow good. I want to get a good growth. I plant my rows about twelve feet apart and my hills in the rows about twelve feet apart. I'll take my shovel and dig a square about three or four feet out, fill it with fertilizer and rake it nice and smooth. I plant my seed in that in early spring." Mr. Hooper suggested a mesh fence for the vines to grow up on, so that the gourds could hang down. This helps them to grow straight. Don't pick the gourds off the vines. Let the vines die, and after the first frost, turn the gourds over so that they will dry out on both sides. Pull them off the vines after they are completely dry and hard—about December or January. Then they are ready for holes to be drilled in them and the seeds cleaned out of the inside of the gourds. Both these men save their seeds from year to year. Then they select the year's crop of short-necked, big, round gourds. Gourds may be reused from year to year, but as they get battered, replacements are necessary.

"In preparing houses for the martins, you should always clean the gourds out and put sulfur in them to keep down mites . . . , about a teaspoonful to each gourd. Mites get in the feathers of the martins."

Put the gourds on a pipe or pole, about twenty feet high. The gourds are put up in February and taken down to be cleaned and stored after the martins leave in late July or August. Nylon cord is recommended by Bob Hooper to tie the gourds to the crossbars on the pole [see *Plate 210*], as wire breaks easily when the gourds are blown by the wind. The martin houses must be erected out in a field or clear area in the yard, away from trees and buildings. The martins don't want to be anywhere that a cat or snake could get to their nests. Martins won't even light in a tree. They do not present the usual problem of birds near the house because they carry their droppings away in little capsules.

Mr. Hooper told us many interesting things about the martins. They have several poles with gourds in their back yard and sit out in the evenings watching the martins fly in and put their babies to bed after feeding them. They wake the Hoopers in the mornings with their chatter, and the Hooper family feels as though some of their children have left home when they depart in August. We asked if they thought the same ones ever came back, and they said that they really do think so. They seem to know their way around so well. Mrs. Hooper said that when she hangs clothes on the line, they perch on the electric wires and chatter. When she goes in, they fly off until she or some other member of the family come back out in the yard. Then they come back to visit again.

About the only time they light on the ground is when they are building their nests and then only to pick up leaves and twigs. They like to line their nests with green leaves to keep the nest cool. They will come down for crushed eggshells if you put them out on the ground in the open. That is about the only thing you can feed them off the ground. They do most of their feeding in the air, low to the ground in the mornings and climbing higher all day long, then back near the ground in the evenings.

The martins send out scouts in early March. They can be seen around for two or three days. Then they leave and after several weeks, the scouts come back with others. By the twenty-fifth of March, about ten pairs will be around a set of gourds. Each pair usually likes to occupy two gourds—one for the parents and one for the young. They stay only long enough for their young to hatch and be able to fly. It takes about three weeks for them to hatch, and they start building the nests about the first of May.

The purple martin is about the size of a dove in the air. If the sun shines just right on the male, he is purple. Mr. McClure says that one morning you wake up and realize the martins are gone. It's such a lonely feeling.

PURPLE MARTIN GOURDS

213

There is no way to keep them here after late July. They stay just long enough to raise their young; then they go back to South America until the next spring.

BARBARA TAYLOR, ANNETTE REEMS

Photos by Tom Carlton.

DIPPER GOURDS

In the past, many people found that the gourd could be used in different and useful ways. They used gourds to make holders for women's sewing notions, to store lye soap after it was made, and as small types of bowls or dishes for decoration or to put odds and ends in. One of the best uses of the gourd was as a dipper at the well or in the house for drinking purposes.

The scientific name for a dipper gourd is *Cucurbita foetidissima* (perennis) and a couple of its common names are calabash and siphon gourd.

Not very long ago Suzy set up an interview with Lawton Brooks who grows his own gourds and had said he would cut us out a dipper gourd when we came. I was really glad I was involved with what went on that afternoon; the main reason being that it was my first visit to Florence and Lawton's, and I just enjoyed spending that part of the day with them. When Suzy and I arrived there, we talked awhile as Suzy has known them for a long time. Then we discussed the process of growing gourds. We went on out on the front porch while Lawton talked and made the gourd into a dipper. In an hour or so, we ended up with the gourd finished and ready to be used for drinking.

ROY DICKERSON

LAWTON: Gourds're a thing that has to be planted early, but if frost touches them, it'll kill'em. You've got to get a gourd planted early. Now the way I get mine, and the best way I think to do this is to plant'em the last of March in pots. And then they come up in them pots; well, when they come up, they'll just grow up a long stem in the shade and two little ol' leaves will grow up about [six inches] high. But just let'em alone and then you take them out there and you can transplant them. You can set'em out



PLATE 215 Lawton Brooks offered to show us how to make a dipper out of a gourd.

PLATE 216 The gourds themselves ripening on a fence in Happy Dowdle's back yard.





PLATE 217 Lawton first chooses where the hole is to be cut, and then rings the spot with a pencil line.



PLATE 219 Slowly he trims down to the line itself.

PLATE 218 Starting in the center of the penciled circle, he begins to cut through the gourd's shell with his pocketknife.

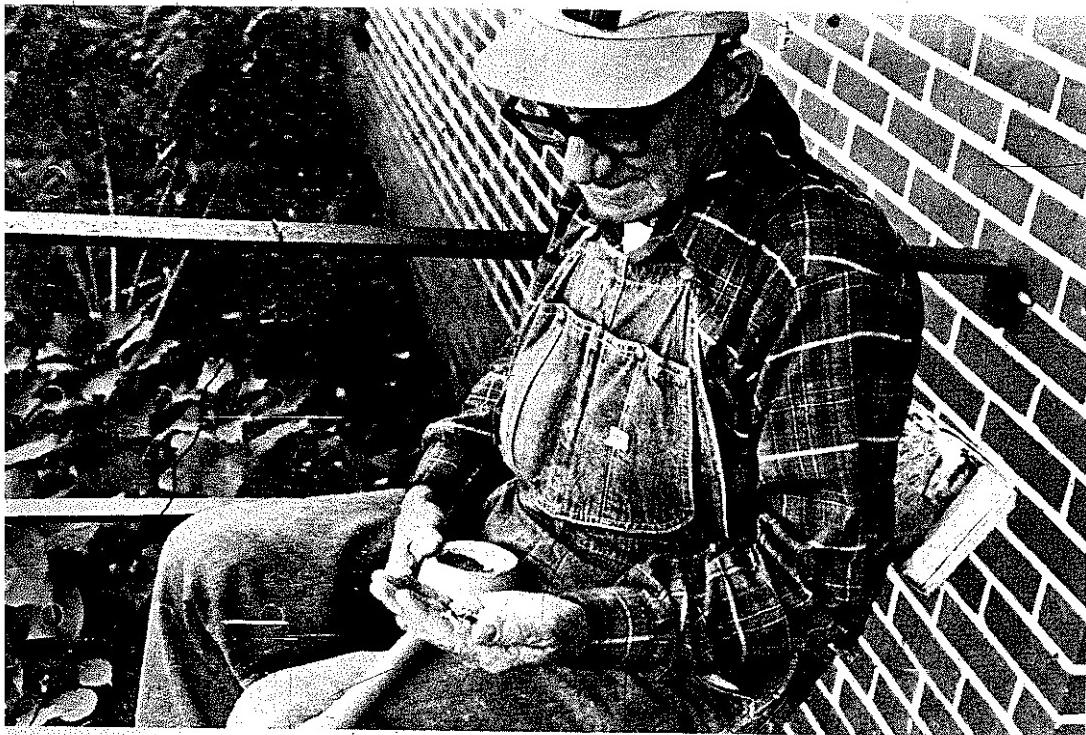


PLATE 220 Next he scrapes out the spongy inside and the seeds, and saves the seeds to plant next spring.



PLATE 221 Then he trims up the edge . . .



PLATE 222 . . . files it smooth . . .

PLATE 223 . . . and goes to the sink to try it out.



wherever you want to, when you think there ain't going to be any more danger of frost. Now down at [Suzy's] place, you've got a perfect place 'cause you're nearly at the frost line. It wouldn't hit that way like here in these low places, 'cause you're just about above the frost line. And if you get down there, you can grow'em; you've just got to grow some next year. I'm gonna pot a bunch of'em for you. Pick you a good place and I'll come help you put up your wires; I'll get your wire. You just furnish the place, and me and you'll grow us a bunch of gourds.

They like a pretty good soil. They like a little clay in their soil but they need pretty good soil to grow. Manure's good [for fertilizer]; just regular ol' stable stuff.

They have to have support to [grow specifically into a dipper gourd]. If they lay on the ground, they're liable to grow in just any direction. [A fence for support] wouldn't have to be too high if you just keep the vine up on the fence. You know how they took to my clothesline up here—they'll just go from one to another, and they'll get around. [The gourds] just tie themselves to a fence or anything they can climb. Wherever the vine touches, it attaches itself. Then it goes a little further and ties itself again. You'll have to break them loose, because they've done tied themselves—the wind won't blow'em down.

Sometimes a vine will blight, but not bad enough to hurt. I've never had any insects bother me. If them ol' gourds stay there and they mash down into the ground, the seeds will come up in another year volunteer. They'll mix if you get'em too close to the cucumbers—it'll be so bitter you can't eat'em. Now I tried that out. I had my gourds on the lower part of my fence. And my cucumbers were way up here, but the vine runs down that way, y'know, and they didn't go all the way to the gourds. Anyway, we couldn't use them cucumbers; they was the most bitter things I ever ate. They was the prettiest cucumbers, but we couldn't eat'em. They were so bitter we just let them lay there. It didn't bother the gourds. It'll make the cucumbers bitter-like; cross pollination is why it happened. I don't know about squash; I never tried them.

You ought not to plant [the gourds] any closer than six foot apart. That gives them a chance to go one way and the other, or cross over each other. [Just plant them] along the edge of the fence; they'll take a runner and go by and hit something, anything, and climb it. Now this man that raised them in Atlanta gave me this gourd here. He planted one by his woodshed and out in a field he laid him a pole in the fork of the apple tree, and that thing went right on up the apple tree and crossed over to the other one and filled'em both up. They was hanging that close together. By gosh, I bet my pick-up [truck] could of been filled up twice. That's the prettiest sight I ever seen in my life from that vine. That goes to show you there would

have been about a thousand if it all would have been counted. So you can't tell how many you'll have; it's according to how they get started, and how they turn out, and the season they get planted.

It takes them a long while to mature and get ready for the frost; frost keeps'em from rotting. Just let them hang till it frosts on them, or two or three good frosts. That hardens their shell better. Now [that man in Atlanta] hadn't picked his [gourds] till 'long in the winter and them apple trees was hanging full.

Leave about three inches shank [when you pick them]; break it off near the vine and leave the rest on the gourd. When you pick'em, you should set'em in a dry, cool place, in the air. Let them settle one or two months, and the seeds get hard and everything. They should be dry enough to rattle. When he gets dried out good and hard, then you can make your dippers. They're green growing, but turn kind of yellow when mature.

There's a type gourd they call a martin gourd. This is for the martin bird. They've got another great big one they call a half-bushel gourd. They grow more like a pumpkin. The old folks used to use'em around the house to put something in them for a waste basket or a sewing basket. They'd use the big gourd for it. Just cut the top off and clean'em out. It makes a good one; they'd last from now on. Just like a dipper would last from now on. Old people, when they made their lye soap, they'd use them to make their soap in and store it. And they've got a blamed gourd they make a dish out of. It grows kinda like a dish and it's got a ring around it. You cut out the ring and that ring makes a lid.

FLORENCE AND LAWTON BROOKS

Here I was, a VISTA volunteer, a Yankee from Connecticut in a strange place, very uncertain as to whether or not I wanted to stay. Who should I find but Florence and Lawton Brooks. They immediately adopted me, worried about me, fed me lots of collard greens and pound cake, and took me fishing. They revealed the mysteries of sauerkraut, cured hams and bee gums, introduced me to their friends, made me feel more at ease and less of a stranger. When I married, they adopted my husband, even though they can never remember how to pronounce his last name. And when I made my first garden—a pitiful one—they acted like it was one of the best.

Florence and Lawton greeted me with open arms, and opened up their world to me. I love that world, treasure it, almost wish I had never known another, and am concerned for its delicate existence. A lot has changed for me since I first came here, but Florence and Lawton have remained constant.

Now I'd like to share them with you.

SUZANNE ANGIER

**"Always somethin' around to entertain ya',
by gosh, if you's on the outside."**

FLORENCE: Y'never get lonesome livin' out in th'country. I could always look out th>window and see th'mountains, maybe a deer, the cattle a'walkin' around.



PLATE 224 Lawton with Cathy D'Agostino and Cathy Campbell.

LAWTON: Cattle and deer a'walkin' around, birds a'hollerin', foxes a'barkin'. You never get lonesome up there. I used to live up Coleman River. I really enjoyed it too. I enjoyed these mountains more than anything in the world. I enjoyed to see the wild game and stuff that I could see, just set up on my porch, an' I'd always nearly go out there anytime, set down awhile, an' I'd see some kind of wild game walkin' around; a turkey here, groundhog. Florence and I enjoyed it fine till she commenced havin' asthma. I'd like to be back in the woods. Pretty water, good clean country woods t'be in. I don't like this inside business. I'd rather be out anytime. That's the reason I always took farmin'. I never did want no inside job. I'd rather be out in the country. Clears m'thinkin' or somethin'r'nother. There you can see somethin' a'goin' on all the time outside. They's always somethin' a'goin' on all the time outside. You never get in a place where you don't hear nothin'. When did y'ever sit down an' ain't heard a thing in the world? Always somethin' around to entertain ya', by gosh, if you's on the outside. Y'never get lonesome out there.

FLORENCE: I like to hear cowbells ring at night. People used to keep bells on their cows, y'know. You get out an' you could hear all sounds of them. Some of them'd be little, some of 'em 'ud be coarse, some of 'em

'ud be kind of music-like. You could hear the little ol' bells go "ding, ding," an' then you could hear a big ol' coarse one—hear all kinds. They go, "ding, ding, ding, ding," just like someone's heart a'beatin', just as reg'lar, all th'time.

"There wouldn't have been any people left on Nantahala."

FLORENCE: We used t'have picnics for ever'body way on up th'river, an' th'only way we had of going was on that train. They'd have big old flat cars, and benches made on'em for th'people t'sit on, an' we went up there one day to a picnic, an' started back, an' th'brakeman an' th'engineer an' eyer'body got drunk. An' you talk about comin' back down that track, well it was th'awfulest thing in th'world. 'Fraid it was gonna wreck an' kill everyone of us. A wonder it hadn't. It was several miles—twelve, fifteen, maybe twenty. A long ways up there. Somebody ought to have whipped them trainmen when we got it stopped. It would have killed a pile. Well, everybody over there would have been killed. There wouldn't have been any people left on Nantahala, 'cause ever'body went. We didn't leave nobody at home.

PLATE 225



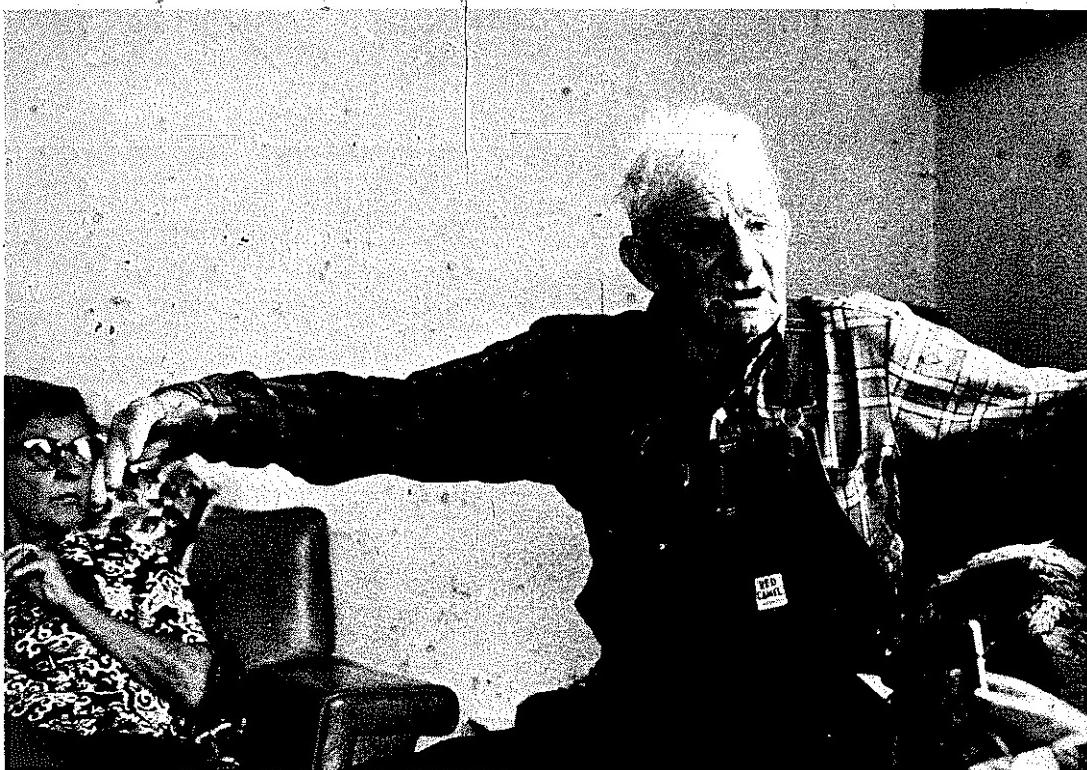


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LAWTON: We had old wooden wheel wagons—saw a big old black gum tree down, black gum won't bust—an' then we'd saw that wheel about [four inches] thick. Take a crosscut saw an' throw it down to it. All right, then we'd take us a big old auger an' bore us a big hole through that, an' there was our wheels. Then we run us a axle through there, an' right behind these (front wheels) we tied us a rope onto both ends of th'axle t'guide it. We built us a frame, then we'd put us a piece across here to nest our feet on, then make us a seat back here—you just set there an' guided it. An' you couldn't wear them wheels out—they just wore an' wore an' wore. Sometimes th'wagon was s'heavy it'd take two or three of us to get it to th'top of th'hill. But, boy, you talk about going down—we'd all git on an' by God, we'd take a good ride. *Right* down the hill we'd go.

FLORENCE: And we walked laurel bushes. They was a laurel thicket close to our house that you could walk around an' around an' around all day an' not touch th'ground just like a squirrel. Just hold to the branches an' walk from one branch to another. An' down under there it was s'pretty, an' clean; just laurel leaves where they'd fallen down.

We'd make our own guns for Christmas; get iron pipes an' drive 'em in logs, put gunpowder down in there, put a piece of rag down in there, v'know, for a fuse, put a little kerosene oil on that, an' put that on fire, so while that was burnin' y'had time t'get out of th'way. One time my brother made one too big an' it hit th'edge of th'porch an' tore th'edge of th'porch

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off. My brother had taken a can of powder (which he shouldn't have done) down on th' railroad track where they'd been a'blastin' rock. It didn't shoot nothin' out of th' pipe, that ol' pipe just blew up—golly, when that powder went off, the whole thing—why, it just split that ol' log all to pieces. If it had went up on top of th' house, that old iron pipe would have come down through th' top of th' house. Boy, Dad stopped our gun shootin' right there.

An' then they'd get old rags an' roll them—make great big balls out of them, put kerosene oil on that an' put gloves on an' get out an' throw'em from one t'th'other, an' catch'em an' throw'em back. An' them afire!

LAWTON: We'd play blindfold and please an' displease—it'uz a little ol' thing. A gang of us'ud be sittin' around and one [of us] would be up all th'time. Well, if I was th'one that'uz up, I'd ask you if you were pleased or displeased. If you'd say you're pleased, I asked what pleased y'. An' you could say, "A'settin' with so an'so I'm pleased." If you're displeased, I'd say, "What will it take t'please you?" Well now you might say you'd be pleased if so an'so would get up an' go over an' set with a certain person, or for that person to get up an' set with another. Whatever you put on'em they had t'do. If they didn't do that, why they'd black that person's face. If y'played it, y'had t'play it out, but it just goes on around like that. Sometimes we'd make a person get out an' walk plumb around th'house in th'coldest time in the weather.

FLORENCE: We'd play fox an' dog. Get an old Sears and Roebuck catalog, tear it to pieces, go off a'strewing it through th'woods. We'd let him get started about thirty minutes an' then a whole bunch of'em trail that, y'know. He'd be th'fox, y'know, an' a whole bunch of us'ud be th'dogs. Sometimes he'd take us five or ten miles over them mountains, int those rabbit places, briar patches.

But then when th'fun started was when we had a big snow, an' we had a lot of'em. We'd get out right after it quit snowin' an' make our tracks with a long, big ladder. We'd go way up in th'holler an' we'd make our tracks down through there, an' it'd get packed down. Well, we'd get up there an' you talk about flyin' down through there, now we did. Four or five of us on th'ladder, Mommy right up there with us. I guess it was five or six steps, an' my older brother was a brakeman. He was in front an' had a big old stick t'put under one of the runners. Well, he got down there an' jumped th'track, started through a briar patch an' ever' one of us rolled off in th'snow but him, an' he just got scratched all up.

LAWTON: [Buford Long] had a bow an' arrow, an' I had one. Well, we was out a'killin' birds an' I took me an umbrella stave an' I cut off a

piece about [five inches] long, an' I filed it sharp an' drove it into this sourwood arrow I'd made, an' I fixed him one like mine. Well, these birds lit up in this nut tree. I said, "Now wait a minute till I get m'arrow ready." Well he just hauled off an' shot right up through there an' scared'em all out. That made me mad an' when he did I jus' turned around an' shot'im right there in th'jaw. It went under his jaw there an' went between his teeth an' stuck in his tongue—enough to make his tongue bleed. It uz lucky it hit'im there. It might a' killed th'poor ol' boy. God, he just fell an' commenced hollerin' an' it'uz as close to his house as from here to that door yonder, an' his mammy, she come to th'door—she was a'sweepin' th'house—an' here she come with th'broom. Said, "What's the matter?"

'Buford said, "Lawton shot me!"

God a'mighty, she chased me to that river—I didn't have time to tell her th'details or nothin'. I took off, her after me with that broom. I jumped that creek [but] she couldn't cross th'creek, an' I went on home. I felt bad about it. I hated it, but me an' him played together right on after that. Hit swelled up a bit—his jaw did—but not much. They give me a whippin' at home. Buford's mother went an' told them about it, an' they gave me a whippin'.

FLORENCE: Can you remember th'first picture show you ever went to, Lawton?

LAWTON: Yeah, th'first one I ever remember was at Hayesville. They showed it on a wall—no sound. Just people runnin' around here an' there. An' I thought it was somethin' awful seein' them act a fool like they was. I don't remember what it was about. They was no sound, an' they just showed'em runnin' around. I'll never forget that.

FLORENCE: First one I ever saw was in th'barn loft. It was before we were married—great long barn they put th'screen up back there, an' we all sit at th'other end. They wasn't many people over there. That was th'best place we had t'do it except for th'school house, an' th'teacher wouldn't let'em go down there. She thought it was silly. I can't remember what it was, but they was T-model Fords a'racin', goin' around fast—couldn't hear a thing—just see'em.

"I seen that thing; I went wild about it."

LAWTON: This ol' boy, he had this car, an' they wasn't many of them around in th'country. Cars was scarce. He had this thing, made just for

two t'ride in. They wasn't no fenders over th'wheels, y'know. Just a body an' a seat here, an' the wheels out there by themselves. I seen that thing; I went wild about it. An' I wanted it. I kept on my daddy, an' he'd always give in an' buy me what I wanted. An' I kept on at him, an' he said, "Now, son, if I get you that thing, th'first thing you'll do with it is get killed with it. I don't want t'get you nothin' you'll get hurt with." An' I kept on. Well, one day he told me, he said, "Well, son, if you go out to that man about th' car, I'll pay for it."

So I peeled out across th'mountain, went over to his house, an' he told me what he wanted for it. I come back an' told m'daddy, an' he wrote me a check, an' told me t'take it to him. I went back then an' he brought me back in th'car. Well, we had a big ol' shed at the farm where I was, t'keep th'car. Well, the drip off th'shed roof made an ol'rut there. I'd get out there. The car had one of those little old gas levers. [I'd] pull th'gas lever down t'go, an' I'd ease up to that rut, an' I wasn't givin' it enough gas an' it'd stall. An' I'd have t'get out an' crank again. I fooled with it about a hour, an' finally I got mad an' I said, "I'll get y'tgo in this time—I'll keep y'a'goin'." So I never thought about when I took my foot off th'clutch, it'd jump in high gear. When y'have your foot on th'clutch, it's in low gear, an' when y'take it off it jumps into high gear. So I got back out there up to th'rut an' it'uz about t'stop again, an' I just jerked th'gas lever plumb down. An' that thing just jumped over th'rut an' into th'shed we went, an' I'd forgot an' jerked m'foot off th'clutch, an' it hit high gear an' hit th'back end of th'wall, an' it just took all of it down.

Then it took off through th'cane patch an' I got scared, an' I gave it a cut [with the steering wheel] an' when I did, it turned up on its side and I went off on m'hands and knees into th'cane patch. It tore up a whole lot of his cane. Made Daddy mad! He come in, he says, "Son, I want you t'get rid of that devilish thing, it's gonna' kill y'. I told you it would. I want you to sell that thing."

That was right after I got it. So had t'go sell th'old car then. I kept it around there awhile, but I never did drive the blasted thing after that.

"Sleet'r'snow, we had t'go."

FLORENCE: Sleet'r'snow, we had t'go. There wasn't many people there, an' th'school was just a two-teacher school, with small school rooms, an' just taught through the eighth grade. Now we didn't even have no homework in school—while th'teachers were doin' other classes, why we'd have th'time to do our studying an' get our lessons done. Didn't have no such thing as report cards. We started in th'fall an' went till up in th'spring.

LAWTON: There wasn't no such thing as a bus—we had t'walk. I walked four miles each way. That's eight miles an' y'had t'take your dinner with y'—carry it in a poke.

I never did like school. I paid the devil for not likin' it. I went wrong there. Th'teachers, they was rough, some of'em. Why, one 'bout knocked my ears off—the way they'd hit y'—boy, that hurt! She'd come by if we wasn't a'doin' right, if we wasn't lookin' at a book'r'somethin'. She'd go down one aisle, maybe you wouldn't see her go down there, an' she'd walk around an' see what you was doin'. Well, she'd come around behind me an' I wouldn't know it. An' she'd hit me up side the head with a ruler—it felt like somebody broke it, y'know.

I remember one teacher who was a real nut—I don't know where she was from—not from our country. She'uz rough. She'd make us stand up on one foot up there in front of all of'em—on th'stage, y'know, an' you had t'stand there. She wouldn't let you put your other foot to the floor. An' then she'd make a ring on th'wall, an' you'd have t'stand with your nose in that ring so long. She'd do that t'punish us . . . for talking, fightin', one thing an' another. I always liked t'talk an' have fun, an' ever' dadblamed time I'd cut up, I'd get a whippin'. They'uz some girls sat at the desk right in front of me, an' I'uz always aggravating them, an' they'd tell th'teacher, an' she'd make me stand up on one leg with m'nose in a circle on the wall, an' she'd whip me sometimes, an' she'd try t'beat m'ears off with a pencil.

FLORENCE: At school, we had a man teacher—he was my first teacher, an' I liked him. Then another man came. Th'first one died. An' this other man come t'teach—that'uz th'last year I went. I'uz supposed t'have went through th'eighth grade that year, an' after we like t'run over that teacher, I'uz afraid t'go back so I stayed at home. That's th'time we stole th'lever car. We'uz a'ridin' down th'track right in front of the schoolhouse an' like t'killed th'teacher. He tried t'stop us an' got in th'middle of the track an' waved his arms, figured we'd stop. But we fooled him, boy, we just barely missed him. I was sittin' where y'put th'brakes on, an' all th'kids a'sayin', "Florence, don't stop. Don't stop." We went through there pushin' those handlebars up an' down, up an' down, as fast as we could. We nearly ran over that teacher. He shouldn't a'got in th'middle of th'tracks if he didn't want to be run over. Now let me tell you, if we'd a'hit him, we would have jumped th'track, gone into th'river, an' killed him an' us, too. But just thought, "You crazy thing, you, standin' there." But he finally got out of the way.

An' I never went back to school after that! The other kids went back an' they got a whippin'—they ought'a got me out an' give me one. I'uz

chicken. I should'a gone right back with'em an' a'took my whippin' with th'crowd. I see that now. Poor ol' Dad. I think he'd of died, but he never did know that. If he'd a'knowned, I'd a'got a whippin'. You know, we were mean in a way—we took ever'thing as it come. We didn't mean t'do no meanness, we was just havin' fun. So I quit an' got married an' got educated anyways!

"Oh, hoeing corn. How I hated that th'worst of anything."

LAWTON: Back when we'uz comin' up as kids, th'kids didn't do like they do nowdays. We had certain times that we'd play an' certain times we didn't. If we worked good all week and everything, why we'd get a hour off on Saturday evening. We'd get out an' have a big time durin' that hour; seemed like it wasn't over five minutes till that hour was up. It was something t'look forward to. Then on Sunday evenings we got t'play till time t'do th'milkin', feedin', like that. We'd play till as late as we could, then we'd go home an' you'd never seen such workin' in your life t'get th'work done up 'fore dark. If you didn't do it but one time, they wouldn't let us have no play time for a week'r'two off Saturday and Sunday evenings. An' days that you wouldn't get to play at all, you'd just have t'sit around there an' watch th'other kids play. Well, I'd a'ruther took a whippin' an' a'got out there an' played any time. But they wouldn't do that—they knowed what hurt us worse than a whippin'.

I'm honest. I do believe that children growed up happier then. I'll tell you the reason why. What kids did get, they enjoyed it. They didn't [usually] get nothin'. But if they got any little ol' thing, they really enjoyed it. Now they get so much they don't enjoy nothin'. You can't get'em enough for Christmas an' things like that. We didn't get anything! If I'd a'got a tricycle I wouldn't a'swapped it then for the best Cadillac that ever drove up here today, but I didn't get it.

My habit was huntin' an' trainin' an' foolin' ~~with~~ dogs. I thought more of my dogs than anything else. I got more kick out a'my dogs than anything. An' huntin'—rabbit huntin'—me an' my dogs got a kick out a'that. That's what we done when I could get off enough. But most of the time when I went, it'd have to be a'rainin'. Now if it'd been raining all day I could go. If it wasn't raining, we had somethin' to do. We didn't just go out and say, "Be back directly," or "I'm gone." We went when they said we could go. We didn't go till they did. An' they'd give us so long to stay then.

Oh, hoeing corn. How I hated that th'worst of anything. Right out in that hot sun one row at a time an' you get in a big ol' field an' just go along as slow as you have to go a'hoein'. You couldn't build no time. Hoe all day and you wouldn't get as far as from here to there. All day and then just think about the days and days y'dad t'go to get to that upper end of that field. An' it had to be done. Ever' stalk of it had to be hoed an' cleaned up around. I despised that worse than anything out in that hot sun. Oh, yes, they's agreeable with us, good to us. But ever'body just believed in kids working ever' day. They didn't believe in no playin' going on. Yes, sir, they whipped us if we didn't do what they said do. We got out an' had to work a little if they had to go off'r'do anything like that. When they come in, everything—milkin', feedin', an' ever'thing—had to be done. Wood carried in an' ever'thing. See, they burnt wood an' it had t'be piled on that porch'r' wherever it was—the stovewood box. The stove-wood had t'be in that box. If it wasn't, boy, we got tanned. We all had a job apiece to do.

FLORENCE: Gosh, we did work. I never did work much outside, I usually done th'housework while ever'one else worked outside. Kept me pretty busy in th'house. I done th'cookin' an' house-cleanin' ever since I was about eleven or twelve. I'd tell Mommy to let me go an' her stay in th'house. She'd say, "No, you're like a chicken out there scratchin'. You'll do more in th'house." There was five children, an' Mommy and Daddy—a pretty good bunch.

LAWTON: The best advice my parents give me I didn't follow all up like I should. It uz goin' to Sunday School and t'church, an' stayin' away from bad crowds, 'specially when people're drunk. They didn't want me about people like that a'tall. An' that was good advice. I didn't obey it all the way—I should. They didn't tell me nothin' wrong. If I'd a'done what they said, I'd a been a lot better off.

"When we moved out we didn't have a durn thing t'move."

LAWTON: I was twenty-three, an' Florence was nearly sixteen when we got married. I had t'tell a lie an' get two more fellows t'tell a lie.

FLORENCE: I was just a few days lackin' of being sixteen.

LAWTON: I took two boys with me, had t'have witnesses with me, t'get m'license. Had t'go t'Hiawassee an' get it. I lived in North Carolina, but had t'get m'license in Georgia, an' went to Georgia t'get married. See, in North Carolina—they're tight on y'in North Carolina—had t'go through a whole lot of this ol' red tape up there, an' in Georgia you didn't have t'do nothin' only get with it. I got these old boys t'go w'me. My first cousin, he was a sellin' licenses up there, clerk of th'court'something, so he knowed me an' he says, "Now, Lawton, I don't believe [Florence is eighteen]." He just told me what he thought.

I says, "Well, I do. She's eighteen years old."

An' these two ol' boys with me said, "Yeah, yeah." One of'em said, "Well, I've knowed her ever since she's a baby. She's eighteen years old." An' they never even seen her. So we fooled around, I finally paid m'license. Eighteen was the age, but I got m'license just the same.

Well, ever'body wanted to see us married. I knowed ever'body, y'know, an' ever'body knowed me. An' they always ganged around with me all th'time. I told'em Iuz goin' to th'Georgia-North Carolina line [at Hiawassee] to get married. Just across th'line—we had to be in Georgia t'do it. So they thought I was goin' up to ol' man Pendle's. He lived just across th'line up here at th'main highway. So ever'body thought that was th'place. They said they had people strung up here, horses, wagons, buggies, said they'd never seen th'like just all up an' down th'road, waitin' till we come. But we went th'old dirt road an' went up t'th'other Georgia line, an' got in th'preacher's house right over the line, an' he married us an' we'uz out. We'd been back an' forth in no time, an' they spent all day waitin' over there.

We had a big dance the night before, an' they'd all come t'th'dance at th'house. Now, boy, you talk about people—they couldn't get in th'house—on th'porch, th'yard was full, they was ever'where. You've never seen as many people show up as we had there. But we had a time!

Lived there at Hayesville [when first married]. Lived with m'daddy at the home place. But we didn't stay there long—I wanted t'see how it would be t'get out by ourselves. We rented us a house for a dollar and a half a month, an' I could work it out with him. I had t'work three days f'that dollar an' a half. When we moved out we didn't have a durn thing t'move. Everything was a'moved out when we moved ourselves—they wasn't no trouble a'movin' then.

We had nothin'. Nothin' but a bed.

FLORENCE: We had a big bed an' a little bed. Your mother left us a big bed, an' your daddy gave us a little bed. An' I had some sheets an' pillowcases that I'd saved up. An' we had a old table that th'leg had

been burned off an' your daddy fixed it for us. We carried our water, washed in a four-pound lard bucket.

LAWTON: An' didn't have a thing t'cook with—cooked on th'fireplace.

FLORENCE: An' had a lard bucket for a washpan. Couldn't buy a washpan. That's how hard times was.

LAWTON: I was farmin'—I worked on th'farms around there for people. You could get a job, but they didn't have no money t'pay. Now they could pay you in meat'r'anything you could use, but they didn't have no money t'turn loose. No farmer did.

FLORENCE: We worked t'get tops of fodder t'swap for a cookstove. Well, we had some chickens Mother and Daddy had give us, an' we raised some more chickens, an' whenever they got big enough t'sell we got us a ~~stove~~ pipe.

LAWTON: An' it was just ten cents, a joint, an' we couldn't get thirty cents, by golly.

FLORENCE: But did we have fun! Y'know, we enjoyed it a whole lot better than we do now.

LAWTON: We had more fun. We cut tops and pulled fodder t'get th' stove, then raised fodder t'get the pipes.

Back then people didn't raise hay like they do now. They didn't have no machinery t'cut and bale hay. Some of'em may have had a little meadow they'd cut b'hand' an' rake it up an' stack it up. But most people took th'fodder and tops from their corn, an' they'd stack it up an' use that for feed through th'winter.

FLORENCE: Lawton, tell'em how much wood you said it took t'cook a pan of biscuits with that stove.

LAWTON: Well, I'uz a'devilin'em about m'stove, just a little bitty stove an' a little ol' door opened on each side of it. It'uz th' least little ol' stove. I told'em I could take two corn cobs an' a chip an' have a good fire. Florence made up th'biscuits over there, an' I sat on this side, an' she'd just pass'em through th'stove, an' I'd set'em on th'table on the other side. As they come through they's already done. I had th'most fun out of that stove. I'uz studying about that thing th'other day—I'd give a hundred



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dollars for that thing if I could find it. I ain't seen no more like it. I think it cost seven dollars new.

Now that's th'way we started.

FLORENCE: Had four dollars an' a half in money when we started out, t'buy flour (the miller'd give us half a bushel of meal when we started), shortnin', sugar, salt, soda, coffee.

LAWTON: When I was a'farmin', I'd get up at five in the mornin'. Well, th'first thing I'd do is start feedin' an' milkin'. I'd get that done while Florence was a'fixin' breakfast. I'd come in an' m'breakfast'd be ready—we'd have eggs, biscuits, jelly, ham.

FLORENCE: Sometimes we'd gather up some corn, cut it off th'cob an' fry it for breakfast. Fry chicken an' potatoes, too.

LAWTON: Then I'd put my mules to plow, or to th'wagon to get wood. Maybe I'd haul corn out of th'field. Maybe I'd go t'town for something. Then when I'd come in for dinner I'd feed m'horses'r'mules—throw them

in some corn—they didn't get no hay at dinner. Put'em in th'stable with their gear on, an' I'd go on in an' eat my own dinner. Then I'd go right back to what work I'd been doin'. When I come in at night I'd put m'mules up an' ungear'em. Go to th'house, get m'milk bucket an' milk, an' feed an' water th'cow. When m'chores was done, I'd head in f'supper.

I played the banjo a lot—that's the way it was with me an' Florence when we moved out—that's th'way I made some of m'money the second year there [in Hayesville]. Why, we'd make some money. I'd make ten or eleven dollars, sometimes as high as fifteen. These big shots there in town, they'd have their dances at th'hotels an' things, an' these big shots would just pitch money out, whatever they wanted t'give. We picked up the money an' divided it just before we left. We played at people's houses, too. They'd take a notion to have a dance on th'head of Tusquity'r'anywhere, we were there. Gosh, that helped out—that was th'only way we could of lived.

FLORENCE: I'd go an' dance while Lawton was pickin'. Never did get t'dance with *him* though—he'd have t'make music. Sometimes they'd come after we'd gone t'bed—nine'r'ten o'clock. Why, we'd get up out of bed an' go play until after midnight. But sometimes I'd get mad because

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they didn't let us know before dark, an' I wouldn't go—I'd go over to Lawton's daddy's an' sleep.

LAWTON: I like t'go to a place where you can have a good nice time. Goin' t'them dances was lots of fun—that's about all th'fun they was goin' on. They wasn't no ballgames nor nothin' t'go to. Go to a good square dance. Usually everybody'd stay pretty sober an' ever'thing went off smooth.

FLORENCE: We didn't go out on many picnics'r'nothin'. They'd have Decoration Day at a certain time of th'year. Everybody'd go out for Decoration Day an' have a dinner on th'grounds'r'something like that. An' th'rest of the time th'only thing we ever went to would be a corn-shuckin', or a pea-threshin', or a singin', or a candy-pullin', 'r'somethin' like that. They didn't have ballgames or such as that.

"We went through some hard times. No money."

LAWTON: We stayed [in Hayesville] for—well, we made two crops—two years. We'd raised our own garden and corn and all that. From there we went t'Aquone t'stay with Florence's mommy and daddy. An' there was a rich lady lived down there, Miss Mattie Bates. She had a big place down there, big house, big yard and a flower garden. Nothin' but a big ol' flower garden. She wanted me t'work for her. An' on th'railroad all people could get was a dollar a day. An' she give me a quarter an hour. An' I'd get on m'hands and knees an' crawl all over th'yard, ever' piece of wild grass'r'any kind of grass with seed, I'd had a pair of scissors, I'd have t'clip it off an' put it in a bag. An' she'd have me carry it across th'road so it'd never come back toward her place. But then her health got bad an' she left there. After she left, I went to work on th'railroad.

We went through some hard times. No money. They's people's supposed to have had lots of money. Well, prob'lly th'big shots did. But they'd swear they didn't have a dime—they wouldn't turn none of it loose. They'd like you t'work, but you'd have t'take y'pay in something you could eat, like meat, corn, anything like that, but when it come to money, you couldn't get none. Once in a while you'd get a little job where you'd get eighty cents a day. I've worked many a night all night long for eighty cents. It'uz snowin', rainin', ever'thing. An' I worked on th'railroad—had t'work ten hours for a dollar. An' I walked—well, I'd have t'leave way before daylight—to th'top of th'mountain; then when I come back from

work I'd light m'lantern in th'gap of th'mountain an' go back home—I had t'have light t'see. We was workin' on th'railroad. If it rained an' you couldn't work, they'd dock you. If it rained fifteen minutes, you was docked. That was back in Hoover's days—the worst depression ever been on us.

If you couldn't go one day, somebody else had your job. You'd better go. They was people cryin' for work, a'beggin' for work. Tramps'ud come along by your house beggin' for a piece of bread. They'd never missed a day of work before, an' now they was travelin' huntin' jobs. Couldn't find'em. They wasn't no jobs. Just worked a little now an' then, maybe make a quarter'r'fifty cents a day. I knew this old boy who was workin' on th'railroad, he told me he was leavin', an' he told me to put in my application an' said, "I'll tell'em about you, an' give a good recommendation." Shore enough, I got th'job for a dollar a day. It'uz just a loggin' railroad. It was about eight mile t'work over th'mountains. So that was eight mile one way an' eight mile back—I had t'walk that much an' build ten hours too.

They wasn't hardly no money t'work for. An' I was stouter than a mule an' could've worked anywhere if I could a'got a job that'd pay me a little money. Many a time I just felt like givin' up an' quittin'. I'd get so disgusted. I thought many a time, "Well, now, I'll just shoot myself." They wasn't no light in th'way I'uz a'doin'. But I'd just keep on goin'. Sometimes I'd get so disgusted where I couldn't see what was ahead'r'what was behind.

Let me tell you somethin'. I once heard a fellow say, "Oh, I'd starve before I'd steal." I ain't gonna say that. Because if I see I'm gonna have to, I ain't gonna wait until I get so durn weak I can't carry nothin'. When I go, I'm goin' while I'm able t'get it. An' get away from there *with* it.

"Good God, before y'could bat y'eyes it was done there."

LAWTON: I've caught wild hogs—I dog-baited'em; they's a'watchin' th'dog, an' I went around an' got'em by th'hind legs. I got a friend's ol' shepherd, an' he got after one of'em, he's a'runnin' off in th'branch, an' he commenced actin' like he was gonna get'im, an' I tried t'get that dog t'catch'im, an' he wouldn't do it—he'uz afraid of it. It got t'watchin' him. Well now I thought, "If I can get in th'back above'im an' slip right down on'im, I can catch'im. I just come down th'branch right on him, an' when he was watchin' the dog, I just made a dive for both his



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hind legs, got up and picked him up off th'ground 'fore he started t'turn around. When he did, I kicked'im in th'side of th'head, then I commenced going back'ards with'im. I drug him to th'house back'ards. I fattened'im in a pen an' we eat'im. Wild hogs got more lean about'em, more bacon. They taste better. I'd rather have one that never seen a grain of corn or no dog food; I'd rather have one right off the mast as t'have'im after y'feed'im.

FLORENCE: Dad used t'have [a mad dog]. Ever' time he'd take a runnin' fit, run right through the house, come right in an' jump on top of th'bed ever'time. An' we had a big washin' of clean clothes layin' on th'bed, had just brought'em in, an' that rascal would come in there an' jump right on top of them clothes. An' there's th'washin' t'do over again, an' that's just a'scrubbin' them on an ol' board as hard as you can. No easier way of washin' them—we ought to have killed th'dog!

I don't know [what caused it] less it's caused from worms. But he was a healthy-lookin' dog—fat. The slobber'ud just come out of his mouth when

he had a fit, but his nose an' ever'thing was just clear as it could be. You know, if Lawton'uz out in th'field with him, he'd tree Lawton ever'time. He'd put Lawton up a bush or on a fence or somethin'. After he got him up there, he'd just keep a'goin'. But he'd head right toward Lawton, an' Lawton afraid, an' he'd run up a bush'r'anything he could get to. Lawton didn't know what th'dog might do. Must of been somethin' in th'hot weather, don't you reckon? Sometimes Lawton'ud have to walk along th'top of th'fence post; but that was a big ol' dog, an' I fancy he could've reached him on th'fence posts if he'd a'wanted to bite him.

LAWTON: Then one time a tornado come across that mountain. Just looked like a snow a'comin' across th'mountain, a'comin' down. Good God, before y'could bat y'eyes it was done there. An' at Hayesville, I was a'plowin' down below m'daddy's house, a little ol' field, there was an old log barn there. They was about four'r'five stalls t'th'side of th'barn—



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took a big barn t'have that many stalls t'each side, y'know—so m'wife came down there, an' bring me a drink of water out there, where I'uz plowing, on the fifth day of July. It was a'thunderin' bad, but I just thought it was a little ol' thunder shower, back across th'hill.

So she said, "Well, I b'lieve it's gonna rain, I better get me a bucket of water here at th'spring." An' she started back, an' was just across th'bank when I just happened t'look up an' I said, "You better get back here, look up there." An' it just looked like th'whole mountain was all fire, just a big fog a'rollin' like that, an' she run back t'th'barn, an' I run m'mule in the'barn in th'hallway there; an' there was another man happened t'be workin' up on th'hill above, he run down there. An' I'm a'tellin' you th'truth, th'minute that thing hit, it blowed them logs. I was a'leanin' up against th'corner, just a'standin' there, an' I felt the barn a'startin', it commenced pushin' me. There was a big corn crib right there, an' a big ol' locust post about [ten inches] big up t'th'corn crib. An' I thought when that barn started if I could jump an' get a'hold of that post I could hold on. An' when I made a jump for that post, th'post left 'fore I could get a'hold of it. An' it blowed me 'bout as far from here across th'street out there. And a big oak tree, awful big old white oak tree four'r'five foot through, it just pulled it down. When I hit th'ground that tree hit me; I'uz a'layin' under it, an' that kept [the tornado] from hittin' me.

They wasn't no rain. They was just sticks, ever'thing in th'world. There were all these cuts an' blisters on my face where the gravel an' stuff had hit me. Well, quick as it got light enough I went t'crawlin' back t'see where my wife went to. I just knowed she'uz done killed. An' I looked back when it let up a little, an' I seen that th'barn's gone. I knowed she was too. But I crawled back up there, an' she'd started out till this man grabbed her an' held her, an'squatted down, an' it just blowed th'logs up there about that high over th'top of their heads. Never left a log or nothin'. We never did know where th'barn ever went to. Never did find it. I just knowed she was gone till when I seen that man a'holdin' her there.

Then th'rain come after th'tornado. They's always rain comes after it, and we got in [an empty house nearby]. Somebody'd moved out of it, an' they'uz a bed in there, an' it was cold—that's the coldest rain—seem like it'uz ice in that water, so we tore up that old bedstead, built us a fire an'dried off in there.

These tornadoes, they just come, maybe won't hit a thing here, an' it might dip down right out here an' not leave a cussed thing for a mile an' a half. Then it may just rise up all at once an' just rise right over your house.

"I've seen lots of changes in my life."

LAWTON: What about th'difference between now an' then? Now if you could live back in them days and just see what we've seen an' what way we had t'do. There's so *much* difference. People'd never believe they'd been a time like that now.

FLORENCE: Sometimes I just wonder if there was times like that. I know they was, but th'way it is nowdays, so many ol' cars an' ever'thing to go anywhere y'want t'go. *Then* you couldn't go no way without ridin' in a wagon or ridin' a horse or walkin'.

LAWTON: I've seen lots of changes in my life. I'uz just wonderin' if I could live as long again as I have, what kind of a world we'd be in. But I just know the world is different from what it used t'be. Back then, when people had more time, they thought lots more of each other than they do now. Yeah, they did, they thought more of people than they do now. They's lots more people than they used to be. Now that's got lots to do with it. Oh, just lots more people. They goin' s'fast, that they ain't got time to take up with you. They ain't got time to take up with me. They goin' so fast. An' that's what makes th'difference. Used to be all ever'body had was time. They had plenty of time. They would stay all day with you if they wanted to—they could stay all week if they wanted to. They had all th'time. They didn't have nothin' t'say like, "I've got to be there tomorrow," or "I've got to be there in an hour," or "I've got to be out there." They wasn't no jobs like that. They wasn't no work like they is nowdays.

Back then, they wasn't no such a thing as a car—you couldn't hurry. If you wanted t'come see me an' I lived here an' you lived in Hiawassee, you'd have t'start early this mornin' t'drive a wagon over there. Well, I couldn't come back that night or I wouldn't get t'stay none. I'd have t'go spend th'night with you. I'd have t'come back th'next day an' let m'stock rest that long. An' you wasn't in no hurry when you started off. Seems like now if you can't go t'Atlanta an' back in th'same day, God, you way behind. You ain't got time t'fool with it. People livin' s'fast you got t'keep up with it in order t'stay up with things. You got t'be fast t'keep up with it. You can't slow down like we used t'do. I can't either.

FLORENCE: We used t'walk across th'mountains—start early in th'mornin' till nearly dark t'see Lawton's daddy, carryin' a baby. Walk.

Twenty-two mile. We'd stay a day or two t'rest up, then go back home. But we enjoyed it.

LAWTON: I'll tell y'what—people enjoyed life better then than they do now. Because ever'body thought s'much more of each other. You never met a stranger; you never met anybody who thought they was any bit better than you neither. You never found people like that. If you got down sick, people'd come askin' about your eating supply, too. If you didn't have it, here'd come somebody with a shoulder of meat, somebody with a middlin' of meat, somebody with a ham—throw it right down there on your table. See that you had somethin' to eat on. An' then expect no money for it. Now tell me now who's gonna come up there when you're down an' throw you a good country ham down on your table—without any money. Now you show me one. Not never expectin' t'get a dime out of it. We never expected t'get a penny out of nothin' we done like that. We done it because we *loved* th'people, an' the people loved *us*. That was just a habit that we had.

They's a lot of changes. They's as much difference in people now as they is in day an' night. People don't care for people no more like they used to. Used t'be if anybody got sick in th'community, why people'd go see about 'em, not just pass'em by. If you lived in our community, even if you was seven or eight miles away, when we heard you'uz sick, we'd go see about you. If you had a crop, we'd go an' see about it. See about crops, take care of your animals, get you out of th'rut while you'uz sick. Then when you get up, maybe I might get sick, an' then you'd help, come in with wagons an' mules, gather corn, haul hay . . . anything I'd need t'do would be done for me, just like you'd do it for yourself. An' nowdays you can get sick an' people ain't gonna go see about you t'ask how y'are, let alone do anything for you. You'd freeze t'death 'cause they ain't gonna get you no wood.

People loved people better in them days. I know so. People cared for each other more. Nowdays they're livin' too fast. They ain't got time t'take time with you. That's true. That's as true as it can be. Because I'uz raised up that way. When I'uz comin' up as a boy, I'd go an' plow corn all day for a man, an' you know he wouldn't even offer t'pay you a dime. An' if I'uz behind in my plowin', he'd send his boys, 'r' come hisself, bring his horses an' get right in there an' plow for me two-three days, then just go on home. Wouldn't have no pay. Yep, people used t'help each other. An' when anybody got sick, they never lost anything. Suppose you'd put in a big crop, an' y'get down at corn-gatherin' time, wasn't able t'gather your corn up. People went in there with six'r'seven wagons, why, I've seen seven

neighbors workin' in a field at one time. Why, they'd gather fifty acres in two days by hand.

FLORENCE: An' y'go t'church, Lord, have mercy! Oh, they went t'church all th'time. They went an' wore their overalls, their ever'day shoes. You go to town to this church here with a pair of overalls on, an' see what they say. Oh, they'd laugh at you.

We'd go t'church, maybe several of them come home with us. I've seen it when we had so many people go home with us that the steers couldn't pull'em up th'hill, an' part of'em would have t'walk up th'hill. An' I've seen it when we couldn't all get on th'wagon. They'd go an' spend th'night, then th'next day we'd all go back t'church t'gether.

LAWTON: Go to a meetin' an' see five or six ol' steer wagons tied around up in th'woods, y'know. They's more people then, seems like, that went to church than they do nowdays.

Nowdays you can go to church, an' if you ain't got no money t'pitch in, you may just as well stay home. They don't care whether you dig or not if you ain't got somethin' t'throw in th' dadblamed pot. Back in them days, they wasn't no pot t'pass 'round nor nothin'. If a man had anything t'give the preacher, they'd give him somethin' t'eat.

Believe me, we was happier then than we are now. You knowed what you had was your'n, an' nowdays ever'thing is movin' on so fast you don't have time to enjoy what you have got because you'll see somethin' th'other man's got an' you'll be a'wantin' it, an' be a'studying now just how in th'world am I gonna get a'hold of that now. Y'see so much stuff—I think that's confusin' people more than anything. Th'world's goin' s'fast. Y'see s'many things you want an' you want to keep up with th'other fellow. We don't enjoy life like we used to when things were hard.

FLORENCE: They's so many people now that's livin' s'high they think they's better than th'poor peoples.

LAWTON: Yeah, but that ain't a'helpin' them a bit in the whole world, not in the sight of the Old Master. I don't care how high they live nor nothin' about it. When he leaves here, he's goin' just exactly like I do. He come here without a durn thing, he's gonna leave without nothin'. I'll tell you that. I don't care how much he's got. If you have millions of dollars, then you don't take a dime more than I take.

Nowdays, you have to have money to live. When we was first married, we didn't have none no way. We growed what we eat. We didn't go

hungry. Now, remember, we didn't go hungry. An' back when I'uz raised up, my daddy had plenty of land an' some money in th'bank.

I believe that too much money makes people unhappy. You can't be happy with too much money. Because you're studying about what t'do with it, an' if th'gover'ment's gonna take it away from you, an' what-not. You're studyin' about that a whole lot. An' if you make a whole lot of money, you want ~~a~~ make some more t'go with it. An' seems like th'more you make, the more you want t'make t'go with it; just t'add a little more to it. Seems like that's th'way that people try t'live nowdays. You keep tryin' t'stack it just a little higher. An' that makes them strain themselves an' worry themselves. They worry lots—people does—about their money. They worry more than a fellow like me does, 'cause I ain't got money. I ain't got nothin' t'lose. If I had two-three million dollars I'd be a'wonderin' now, who's gonna get it, what they gonna do with it when they do get it, an' which one's gonna fight over it.

I'd rather have friends as money. Anytime. 'Cause if I had a whole lot of money, an' if you didn't like me, I couldn't get you to do a thing in th'world for me. You'd say, "I don't need the money. I ain't got the time; I got to do this; or I got to go over yonder." But, if you were my friend, if you were really a friend, an' I asked you to go do something, you gonna do it. Ain't no ifs and ands about it. When a friend asks me t'do somethin', I'm gonna do it for a friend, when money wouldn't get me t'do it.

"I wished I had just one little rock from that old chimbley."

FLORENCE: They had more different things where Lawton lived than where I was raised. I was really raised in the sticks. Even now it's still way back. We went over to the old home place one tim^e. It looked so different, though—everything gone. I said I wished I just had one little rock from that old chimbley. We'll go back over there next summer, see if I can find one. Ought to be one—th'old chimbley's got t'be layin' around somewhere. They may have scraped it all off and covered it up. Th'garden growed up, it didn't look right. That used to be a big cleared field up that mountain. Now it's all growed up.

Interviews by Mary Chastain, Eddie Connor, Laurie Brunson, Jimmy Enloe, Mary Thomas, Barbara Taylor, Julia Justice, Beverly Justus, Rebecca Hill, Kathy Long, Russell Himelright, Greg Strickland, Craig Williams, and Ernie Payne.

GINSENG

From the Himalayas to the Blue Ridge, and for as long a time as distance, ginseng has been a favored medicine. The American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium*) is very similar to its Asiatic relative. It has a stiff stalk holding two leaves, each leaf five-divided like fingers on a hand, and vaguely resembling those of the horse chestnut. A small umbel of insignificant yellow-green flowers is followed by red berries. It takes two years to come up from seed, and if a plant has been injured, it might not send up a stalk until the following year. It is slow-growing and long-lived if left alone. The aromatic roots are the part used for medicine, although occasionally tea has been made from the leaves.

It was once found in rich bottom lands from Canada to Florida. William Gillespie wrote, "It is most common in beech woods." Another writer said, "It grows mainly in well-drained upland hardwoods, mixed stands of maple, basswood, butternut, and rock elm, or on the shady side of deep gullies where there is a transition in timber and the vegetation mixes." William Bartram, traveling near Keowee, South Carolina, wrote, "It appears plentifully on the north exposure of the hill, growing out of the rich, mellow, humid earth, amongst the stones or fragments of rocks." Associated plants have been listed as maidenhair fern (*Adiantum*), baneberry (*Actaea*), spikenard (*Aralia racemosa*), blue cohosh (*Caulophyllum*), yellow lady-slipper (*Cypripedium*), and the "little brother of the ginseng," the golden-seal (*Hydrastis canadensis*).

Our native ginseng first came to the attention of Europeans when Father Joseph Lafitau, who had been a missionary in China, recognized the similar American plant growing near a Mohawk village in Canada. He set up ovens and had the Mohawks gather and cure ginseng for the Chinese market. By 1717, it was being brought from as far away as Green Bay, Wisconsin, by the Fox Indians, and shipped to Hongkong via France. In



PLATE 233 A cultivated ginseng patch.

PLATE 234 A four-pronged bunch.



1784, the Empress of China sailed for Macao with a load of ginseng to exchange for tea, ginger, silk, and camphor. Also in 1784, George Washington wrote, "In passing through the mountains, I met a number of persons and pack horses going over the mountain with ginseng." In 1793, André Michaux wrote that ginseng was the only product of Kentucky that could be transported overland to Philadelphia.

By 1798, John Drayton of South Carolina said, "It is so much sought after by the Cherokees for trade it is by no means as plentiful as it used to be in this state." Ginseng gathering had begun to be a way of life for many pioneers. A man could go "sang hunting" and return with a fortune; or in those perilous times, might never return at all.

The early colonists not only gathered ginseng for sale, but used it in tea to encourage the appetite or strengthen the digestion, especially of elderly persons or puny children. Ginseng plus black cherry and yellowroot made a potent tonic, especially with the addition of some home made whiskey. An early herbal suggested gathering ginseng root and steeping it with chamomile flowers for fainting females.

Colonel Byrd, in his *History of the Dividing Line*, wrote, "To help cure fatigue, I used to chew a root of ginseng as I walked along. This kept up my spirits. It gives an uncommon warmth and vigor to the blood. It cheers the heart of a man that has a bad wife, and makes him look down with great composure upon the crosses of the world. It will make old age amiable by rendering it lively, cheerful, and good humored." Many early settlers dug ginseng root for their own use and never thought of selling it. By 1800, several patent medicines on the market featured "seng," or "sang-tonic." Dr. McMasters of Michigan wrote, "Ginseng is a mild, non-poisonous plant, well adapted to domestic as well as professional uses. In this respect, it may be classed with such herbs as boneset, oxbalm, rhubarb, and dandelion. The medical qualities are known to be a mild tonic, stimulant, nervine, and stomachic. It is especially a remedy for ills incident to old age."

With some domestic sale, as well as a continuing foreign market, "sang-ing" became a business in the rich deciduous forests of the American heartland, and on the slopes of the Catskills, the Poconos, the Alleghenies, and the Appalachians.

It was inevitable that some would try to cash in on such a profitable and easy crop by cultivating it. Thus there was a craze for ginseng gardens from 1889 through 1905, with centers in Amberg, Wisconsin; and Chardon, Ohio. Later New York state and then Michigan became the centers of ginseng production. Ginseng was planted in beds shaded by lath slats, or under wire covered by fast growing annual vines. But growers found it took seven years to produce roots large enough to market, and then the

roots lacked the quality of those gathered in the wild. Garden plants were subject to a variety of wilts, blights, and rots, and a whole garden could be decimated in a week. But even though they were a gamble, ginseng gardens continued to appeal to many who wished to make an easy fortune.

However, the most money continued to be in gathering wild ginseng. Around 1922, someone wrote, "Grandma B. took out the back seat of her Model T and filled it with ginseng and sold the load for \$1,100. They dried the roots on shelves behind the stove." As ginseng disappeared in more settled parts of the country, sang hunting in the Appalachians continued. Maurice Brooks wrote that it was one of the few crops that could be sold for cash with which to pay taxes or buy a new gun or hound dog. The sang hunter would go off into the mountains or woodlands with his special sang-hoe made of rigid steel with a narrow blade. The average-sized wild roots weighed up to six ounces when dug, and an expert sanger could grub out two pounds in a day. As they dried, usually from the cabin rafters, it took five pounds of fresh root for each pound of cured or marketable root.

The conservative sanger only dug roots in the fall of the year and carefully replanted the seeds, or the rhizome extension called a "quill," or "bud." To keep ginseng from being completely killed out in an area, some sangers would carry seeds and plant them in other suitable locales. There were, however, those greedy individuals who gathered sang at any time of the year, and did not hesitate to rob a neighbor's patch. Sang hunters would try to find out where their competitors had success, and in turn would keep their own finds a secret. By 1913, Horace Kephart, in *Our Southern Highlands*, wrote that ginseng had been exterminated in all but the wildest regions.

After the war in Korea ruined most Oriental ginseng lands, the sale of ginseng roots reached a new peak, the price rising to \$35.00 a pound for wild roots. Sangers scoured the country for roots, and dealers made and lost fortunes on ginseng sales. The price is still high, and while some ginseng is being brought to dealers from Illinois, Missouri, West Virginia, and Kentucky, the bulk now comes from North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia.

MARIE MELLINGER

"One of these days, there ain't gonna be no 'sang."

Ginseng is slowly dying out. Since people first discovered that "sang hunting" could be a profitable hobby, they have been digging it more

and more with less and less regard for its safety. Now, because of its scarcity and the increased demand for it, the price dealers pay hunters for the dried roots has skyrocketed to \$65.00 a pound.

There is much confusion here as to exactly what happens to ginseng once it is shipped out of the country, but many of our contacts remember it being used in the mountains in teas and other home remedies.

"They buy it in China," said Wallace Moore. "You know, when the President came back from China, it was on the television that that old main guy over there, drunk ginseng tea every day? And he had *three* women. I never have drunk any tea. But now I'll tell you one thing. You can be in the woods and take a stomach ache or the old hungry colic, and you can just chew up some of the fine roots and swallow the juice of it and it won't be five or ten minutes [before] your stomach'll be just as easy as you please. I've had that to happen different times."

Buck Carver said, "You can take the roots that are dry and take a sausage mill or something and grind'em up and drop a pretty good little handful down into your vial of conversation juice [moonshine]. Take this ginseng and liquor and pour out just a small little amount of that in a tea-cup and set it afire. Strike a match to it, you know, and it'll burn. And I mean burn it good. And then turn it up and drink it. It's an awful bitter

PLATE 235 A pod of berries ready for picking and planting.



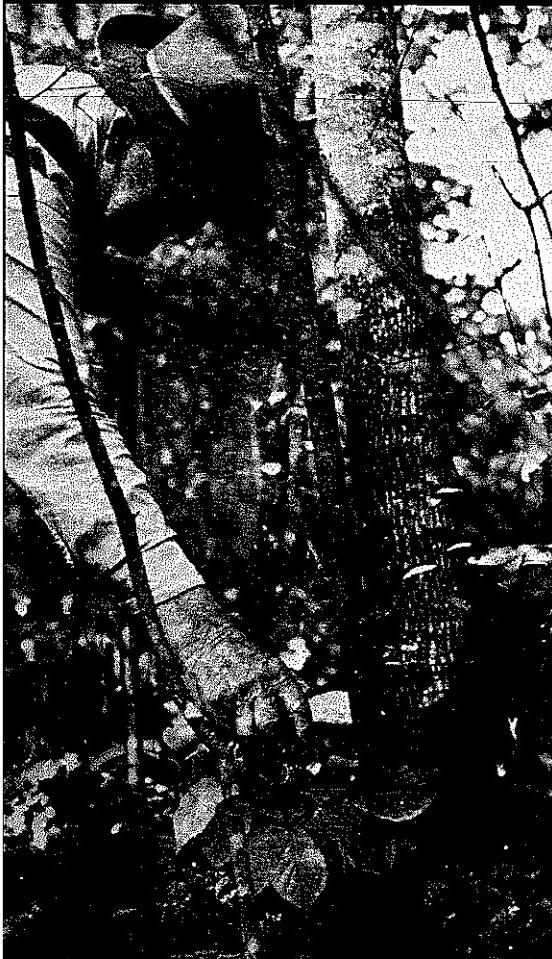


PLATE 236 Harley Carpenter picks a cluster of ripe berries for replanting in his patch.

dose to swallow, but if it don't do you some good you better get to a doctor and pretty durn fast. It really is good for that. And it's also good for female disorders. Very good, they tell me, for that."

Lawton Brooks laughed about a remedy he remembers seeing: "Now it's a bitter kind of something. They used to take ginseng and three or four herbs all together and put it in a quart of whiskey and shake it up and let it sit there awhile and then they'd take'em a drink of it every day. And they called it 'bitters.' And I guess it *was* bitter, for that ginseng'll make it bitter, I'll tell you that! I'll *bet* it was bitter! They didn't tell no crooked tale about that being bitter!"

Alice Lounsberry's *Southern Wildflowers and Trees* (Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, 1901; page 364) says:

"Its true value lies, as we know, in its curious rootstock, long famed as being a cure for almost every sort of ill, and an antidote for every poison. Even the word panacea is believed by many to have been derived from its generic name. In China, where it has been largely cultivated and also exported from that country in immense quantities, it is still regarded as being possessed of properties more powerfully stimulating to the human system than those of any other drug."

Whatever its uses, its popularity grows yearly. Now new demands are being made for it from people interested in organic foods and medicines. As such, it is being written about in publications like *Mother Earth News* and *Organic Gardening*.

Because of its growing popularity, we interviewed a number of people in our area who hunt it or grow it or both. Many of them have been working with it since childhood. It rapidly turned into one of the most fascinating articles we have done recently, for each man had his own favorite stories, his favorite places to hunt and dig, and his favorite methods for finding and raising it. For many of them, the lure was not so much financial as it was just the fun of working with the plant itself—more a hobby than a livelihood. Their enthusiasm carried us along with them.

I really had a great time interviewing these people, and I think they had as much fun talking about it as I had listening. I'd like to give special thanks to Mr. Billy Joe Stiles and Margie Bennett, who helped me get a lot of information on ginseng, and also Suzy and Pat, who took Steve and me on most of the interviews.

CARY BOGUE

THE PLANT

Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolium*) is a plant that grows widely throughout the Appalachians, and does well in many other parts of the country. It rarely grows to more than a foot and a half or two feet in height, and has long, serrate, tapering thin leaves. At the summit of the stem, "prongs" branch off, each ending in a cluster of five leaves. From the summit, at the center of the plant, a smaller stem grows straight up and ends in a cluster of flowers or berries depending on the time of year.

The tuberous root, which grows at right angles to the stem, ranges in size from a half inch to sometimes eight inches in length depending on the age of the plant and the growing conditions. As Wallace Moore said, "The first year it comes up, why its root's not half as big as a penny match stem and maybe not but a half an inch long."

Roots from the older plants are the more valuable, of course, because they are generally larger and weigh more. Good sang hunters dig only the older plants and leave the younger ones for another year, telling how old the plant is by counting the number of prongs it has. Though this is sometimes an inaccurate yardstick, it is all they have to go by. "It comes up a three-leaf," Lake Stiles told us, "and then in a year or two, maybe it'll turn into a two-prong bunch. It'll stay a two-prong for maybe two or three years, and then it'll grow into a three-prong, and from a three-prong into a four-prong if it stands long enough. I have dug a few five-prongs,



PLATE 237 *Foxfire* editor Richard Page (right) makes notes as Harv Reid watches his grandson, Donnie, find and dig a clump of sang.

but not often. Sometimes after it gets four-pronged, that stem [in the center of the plant] will run on up there and instead of having seeds on that stem, they'll be some more prongs come out on that, and the seed stem on top of that. That's called a double-decker. You don't find many of those anymore."

The seed usually takes two seasons to germinate. If planted in the fall, for example, a little three-leaf plant should come up in eighteen months if it is going to germinate at all. In the fall, the leaves turn a bright golden yellow, the berries turn bright red and drop, and then the plant dies back to ground level to come up again the next spring. A more accurate measure of age is the "age stem," a small, knobby extension of the root from which the stem springs each season. Wallace Moore described it this way: "When it first comes up, the top'll come right out of the top [of the root]. And it'll put a little bud right beside that [where the base of the stem connects to the root] for next year's stem. And it'll just do that right on up through there going from one side to the other. It puts a bud on every year for it to come out the next year. And where the stem come out this year, when it dies it'll leave a little notch [where the old stem breaks off] right beside that bud. Then next year that bud'll come out on the other side of the stem, and it'll leave a little notch when it dies. You can count those little notches if it's a big enough stalk to where you can see them. Now where it's small—

just little bitty one and two-prong bunches—you can't count them because they're so close together. You might take a magnifying glass and count them, but you can't with your naked eye. I have counted it up to fifteen and twenty years old where you could count on the stem, but lots of times it's older than that. You count on the stem where the bud comes out, you know.

"I've dug it with the age stem three and four inches long. Maybe two-thirds of the way down, it'll be so little you can't count it. But maybe up here after it got up maybe an inch or two long [in root size], it would put out a feed root on that stem and maybe it would be in richer ground then. Well, that would step your top up—throw a bigger top out there—and then it'd go to having notches on there that you could count. It's according to how rich the ground is and all. Sometimes you can dig a little old one-prong bunch and it'll have an age stem on it'll be maybe a half-inch or an inch long and *still* be a one-prong bunch. But sometimes you can dig a one-prong bunch and it'll have three great big leaves on it—and it the first year that it's come up. It's according to the ground it grows in and how it suits it.

"Now the root a lot of time'll have ridges around it. But there's no way of telling how old it would be that way. [Many people believe that you can tell the age of the plant by counting these ridges, but we could find no support for that.]

"And that root, you find it in all kinds of shapes. I found a root one time looked just like a . . . well, just like the cross did. In drying it, it got split, and I took and put a straight pin in it and pinned it back together and shipped it. I never did hear nothing more about it. But it looked just like the cross."

At first the inexperienced sang hunter may have some real difficulty spotting the plant in the woods as many low-growing plants and ground covers (*Virginia Creeper*, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, for example) have similar leaf clusters. Minyard Conner knows from experience: "Well, now, the Indian turnip's got a big pod of red berries and looks just like it, and it gets red at the same time as ginseng. But that root's hot. It'll burn you up. [Take a bite of that and it'll] make you whistle all day! And I'm sure you boys have all picked spignet in place of ginseng; you know, see some spignet and say, 'There's some ginseng.'"

"That old five-leaf poison vine'll fool you the worst of anything," believes Lawton Brooks, "'cause it's got the same yellow till you get right up at it and ~~go to~~ looking. But ginseng's got more of a *gold* color than anything. Ain't nary another yellow in the world just exactly like it. But that other stuff'll fool you off at a distance. You'll think you see a bunch and you'll go up there and you've found the wrong thing!"

Sometimes the confusion takes on hilarious overtones. Lake Stiles still laughs about the time two members of the administration of our school were out looking in the fields for some marijuana they thought some students had planted, found one of his ginseng patches, and sprayed it all and killed it.

And Wallace Moore said, "My daddy-in-law used to call it 'rattle-root.' It's a three-pronged stuff, and it resembles sang quite a bit off at a few steps. But if you know sang, you can tell it just as quick as you get around it. A man that's hunted it and is well acquainted with it can tell the difference just as quick as he sees it."

The same need for experience applies to the dealers who buy the roots from the numerous hunters. The high price that ginseng has always commanded has encouraged many to start their own cultivated beds near their homes, but dealers claim they can always tell the difference between the cultivated and wild roots, and since the wild roots are believed to be more potent, they bring almost double the price. Dealers have to be sharp, for people are forever trying to fool them by mixing the two kinds of roots together. The number of hours that have been spent trying to figure out whether or not they can really tell the difference, and if they can, how they do it, must be in the thousands. It is generally agreed, though, that the cultivated ginseng grows faster, and thus has a bigger, smoother root than that which has grown in the woods and not been tampered with.

"You can cultivate that stuff," said Lake Stiles, "and it won't bring you half as much as wild ginseng. They can tell it. They can tell it just as quick as you look at that stuff. If it's cultivated, it makes a great big root. If it's wild, it's just a small root. But you can't get by with cultivated sang with a man who knows what he's doing."

Wallace Moore shares the same fear: "I have beds, but I don't fertilize them. I just plant it back up in the woods so it grows like the wild. Now you can put chicken manure around it. That'll really make it grow. But of course you might be able to tell it was cultivated then by the growth on the big stem, 'cause it would grow faster, you know."

Buck Carver has experimented, but carefully: "Right now is one of the times I need to be up there raking leaves and putting on—you've got to mulch that stuff. Now if you put it back twelve to fourteen inches from [the plant], Turner Enloe says this chicken litter'll make them roots grow like nobody's business. But you put it up close and that'll kill it right off the bat. I never throw fertilizer on mine. Except one time I thought I'd try one stalk and see what effect it had on it, and I carried a little handful of fertilizer up there and singled out a stalk and throwed that fertilizer around it—just a complete circle around about four to six inches away from it, I guess—and it done fine. It done all right.

"And I don't know—I just imagine—I've never tried it for it's too expensive a thing to experiment too durn far with, and it's too hard to find to just go on and run the risk of killing it out, you know; but I thought a few times—maybe in the wintertime—[I'd] just throw a little fertilizer right lightly over that cover of leaves that you have on it, you know, and see if that'd help it any. But I don't know. You get to doping it up too much like that and the first thing you know, if you have enough to sell, you're selling cultivated sang for about less than a half [the price]. Cultivated sang grows so much faster and don't have the ingredients in it and the medicinal value that the wild has. The wild has nothing but fertilizer from the earth, you know. It's natural. And where you put artificial fertilizer out there to make it grow faster and make it produce bigger roots faster—more poundage and everything—then you cut the grade of it. It don't have the strength the wild sang has. It just don't have it."

Minyard Conner is cautious, and refuses to dig around the plants in his bed and loosen the ground up for fear the roots will grow big and white and, "They'll look at it and say, 'That's cultivated sang.'"

Lawton, too, shares a healthy respect for the dealers' ability to tell the difference. "I can't figure out how them people know that cultivated sang. Now if I take me some back in the mountains and plant it, I believe I can fool'em. Now you go out here where you grow it, and you cultivate it and tend to it. Now I don't know what kind of fertilizer it would call for, but that might look cultivated. But I believe if I could get me some roots and go back in these mountains and find me a place where nobody wouldn't happen to find it and let it go about four years, I could show a man a nice patch of ginseng, and I don't believe they could tell the difference—it a'growing out there wild. Just stay away from it and let it alone. Set it out when it's right small. I believe it'd grow up wild and they couldn't tell the difference.

"But you have to be careful. I don't know. Don't ask me how they know. Maybe the root gets bigger when you tend it. But they sure can tell, 'cause we tried it with some one time. Put some [cultivated] in with some wild and they could tell that some of it was cultivated. You can't fool'em. A good buyer, you can't fool'em on cultivated sang.

"They like the wild sang the best."

FINDING AND RAISING GINSENG

Many people have started sang patches of their own. Some of them intend to dig the roots and sell them periodically to have a continuing supplementary income from year to year. Others just grow the plant for the fun of it, and because they like to have it around.

In an attempt to find the best spot on their land for a patch, many of them have invested a good bit of energy observing where it grows best naturally and then trying to duplicate those conditions. The problem is that it seems to grow fairly well in a wide variety of conditions, and so there is a good bit of conflict as to what makes the best site.

Wallace Moore has found it just about everywhere, and so when he starts a patch, he just chooses some good, rich, lightly shaded ground and lets it go at that: "It's bad to grow out here on these little dogwood ridges. And that's usually poor ground, you know, and a lot of people won't hunt out there for it. They say it's got to be down in these hollers and in this rich ground. But you find a lot of it on these dogwood ridges. And then it grows on north sides, mainly, but it'll grow up on these south sides if it's rich."

"You can find it under grape vines, and walnuts—black walnut or white walnut, either one—and basswood. And it'll grow around pine, but it's not a place for it to spread like some tree that [attracts birds] that scatters the seed. And it has to have a certain amount of shade. It'll grow right out in a blackberry thicket—in a briar thicket—and in these rich places in hollers. But it's got to have a certain amount of shade; you know. Not too damp. I never found any in a swamp. The only sang I ever found was out on a dry branch bank or up on these ridges on a dry holler or somethin'r'nother like that. It'll grow pretty close to water, but I wouldn't think it'd grow where it's awful soupy."

Lake Stiles has his own favorite places to look: "I've dug it in places where the sun hardly ever hit it. You'll really find more of it in real dark coves and dark ground than anywhere else. And west or north ground. You don't find much of it on south ground at all. It'll grow in dry places, but it prefers damp, dark places. It makes a lot bigger stalk."

Buck Carver agreed with the common belief that north ground is best for it, "But I've found it on every side of a durn mountain except the inside, and I didn't go *in* there! Right up there on that mountain, for instance; it's all in the north side among them cliffs. *But* I've also found it on the south side, and I've found it on this west end here. And I find it on the east end up yonder. 'Course that's northeast. But it grows better in dark, rich north coves under walnut, or lind. You find some walnut out in the woods, start looking for ginseng 'cause it'll usually be there. It's got to have shade. The leaves hold the moisture in the earth."

Lawton Brooks says, "It wants dark ground and deep coves. Where a lot of poplar grows—in those coves—is good. You've been squirrel hunting and come across one of those coves where a lot of poplar grows? Now you don't find it where there's pine and oak and stuff like that in those coves. You ain't gonna find no ginseng. You'll find your ginseng in where

poplar and stuff like that grows. And you can't find it out on these ridges. You hardly ever find it on ridges because it wants dark, damp coves where there's more shade than anything else. It don't like sunshine too good.

"Now you can grow it if you've got dark ground to grow it in, and shade. You don't want it out on a hillside where there's any clay or anything. It won't do nothing there at all. You've got to have it in good, dark soil right in a cove where there's a lot of poplar and stuff grows—and this other old kind of lind tree, and these old cucumber trees. You've seen them. Now you can grow ginseng in coves like that. And it grows on the south and north sides too. I know by going up on the head of Bettys Creek. I dug some on both sides of the mountain up there. But it was in the dark coves."

Good sang hunters have their own code of ethics. They dig roots in the spring only if they intend to transplant them into their own beds. Aside from that, they dig only in the fall when the berries are ripe. The bigger roots, they sell. The smaller ones, they move. The berries are either planted back on the same site, or are taken home to be planted there. Breaking this code increases the scarcity of the plant and puts them all out of business, so even though scarcity has driven up the price paid for the roots, it hurts them all in the long run.

"The only time to 'dig it,'" says Lake Stiles, "is after it matures—after the seed turns red. That's the only time it should be dug. But half the time people will pull the seed off and take them home with them and maybe destroy them and not plant them anywhere. Before it's dug, if they would pull the seed off and scatter them back out on the ground where they find it, there'd be plenty of it. I don't know why, but there's not many people will do it. A few will."

"There's also some who will go, as quick as it comes out in the spring, and start digging it [to sell], and that's the wrong thing to do. [I was at a dealer's once and some people came in] and they'd started digging this stuff early in the spring as quick as it got through the ground. And the little stem that they'd broke off when they dug it was still on there. That showed it was dug before it was ripe. If it's dug in the fall when it should be dug, that stem will fall off. It will not stay on that little root. If it's dug in the spring and summer, that little top stem will stand up and dry on that root. That looked like a . . . put me in mind of a porcupine! When they put them on the scales, them little white ends a'sticking out there. That proved it was dug too early. They said no, but I've fooled with it all of my life. I know better than that."

"And it should never be dug its first years of growth. Then it's just a little bitty three-leaved thing, and the root on that is not much bigger than a toothpick. It ought to be from a three-prong on up before it's dug [to sell]."

Buck Carver has worked for years to find the proper way to get the

berries he has brought in from the woods to germinate: "Now a lot of mine, I think, died up here from lack of moisture. I put leaf mold on them several inches thick, but it wasn't hardly enough. It takes the berries eighteen months to come up. The way it transplants itself out in the woods—the berries fall down in the leaves, you know, and leaves fall from the trees on it, and it lays in there, but one spring, it comes up."

"And you can't plant them berries too deep or they'll rot. I planted over a hundred berries—a hundred and four, I believe it was—out there between me and Turner. It was good and shady, you know. I said, 'Turner, I got a little old bottle of berries over there at the house. I'll plant them there, and if they come up, I'll divide the plants with you.' And he said, 'Yeah, plant them in there.' And I planted 'em durn things and they wadn't a durn *one* of them come up."

"You've got to plant them just *barely* under the ground and then throw the leaves on there. Lord, I guess I've got two hundred berries I'm going to plant up there this time, and like a dummy I've sit around here all this time and never put a leaf on [the bed]. I may do that this evening while I've got it on my mind."

"If you transplant them, you put a good piece of stem with it. You know that little bud right down at the base of that stem? That's your plant for next year. It don't make a whole lot of difference, but I'd rather have that little stalk on there. But if it breaks off down to the root, it's all right. Put it in there and plant it. I have planted *pieces* of roots and they've come on all right. I cut some of them digging them, and I planted the pieces and they've put out little old feeder roots and come on all right. They've made some sang."

"Then when you dig it to sell, you can sell it green, but you get about a third the price. Wait till the last of August when the berries start getting ripe before you start digging. And plant them berries back. If you dig it while it's maturing, that root is just as pithy as it can be; and when it dries up, it'll be a little bitty old swivelled up thing. It won't be slick and firm and hard. It'll be puffy and spongy first, and then it'll be full of wrinkles. And time after the berries start getting ripe; why, it'll retain it's weight a heck of a lot better. You can get a shoe box full of the stuff in the summer time while it's pithy and full of sap and it won't weigh nothing. In the fall of the year, that sap starts going back down, you know, and your sang'll dry up good and firm and hard, and it don't take it too long. I've dug a few roots of it in the summer time—maybe to have a few to chew on or something—and it'll be just as pithy as the dickens. I don't think it's got as high a medical value, either, while it's soft that way. I don't believe it does."

"A feller oughtn't to dig nothing less than a three-prong for the market no way. And a lot of *that's* got a pretty small root."

"It's getting scarcer all the time," said Lawton Brooks. "It sure is. When I'm out digging and find a bunch of seed, I *always* plant them back. Lots of people, though, they just grab them up and take the seed with them and maybe never plant them. But I always cover them seed back in the leaves. Scatter'em around. Then in a year or two, a man can go back to it and dig some more ginseng right in the same territory."

"Don't sow the seed too deep. When the berries go to dropping down, then take your berries off and sow them—just put them on the ground. That's the way they come when it's wild 'cause birds and things scatters them. That's what scatters the blasted berries in the mountains. And then sometimes they fall off and they get in the leaves, and the rain and snow and stuff'll wash them around in under the leaves some way or another and they come up. I've dug great big bunches, and they'll be four or five little ones right around under it. I know that's where the seed fell off and come up."

"And when you plant a root, find rich dirt and just scrape the dirt away a little. Don't break the little feed roots off or it won't come up. And don't worry about cold weather. I know one thing—it won't freeze out. It's a thing that won't freeze. I've seen it knocked over on top of the ground in hard winter, and you know in them north coves where the sun don't hit you *know* it stays cold in there in the winter time. But it comes up every year."

Wallace Moore was full of advice about digging and moving sang: "Ever since I've been big enough to follow my daddy in the woods, why we've dug sang and hunted it. It's not as plentiful as it once was. It's getting scarcer'n what it was. There's so many people now that'll dig the little one and two-prong bunches. When you dig those little one and two-prong bunches, it's not got a chance to come up right. They don't have berries on them. Sometimes a little two-prong bunch'll have maybe one or two berries on it. But you let it alone and it'll put on another feed root up on the top a lot of times, and then it'll shoot up a big top up there and put on ten or twelve, maybe fifteen berries. A man shouldn't gather it under a three-prong bunch."

"And always put the berries back. I always have. My daddy always did, and that's what I've always done unless I had some I wanted to take and sow—have a bed, you know, that I wanted to take and put berries and little roots in. Why then, sometimes I'd save a few of the berries; but I always—nearly always—put part of the berries back where I dug it up. You've got to. It'll eventually die out if they ain't something done. It's getting so much more population now than they used to be."

"But a man shouldn't dig it before the berries begins to get red, and that's along about the last of August. Before then, your berries is not

mature. They're still green. Now my daddy always told me that a berry has got two seeds in it. An average size sang berry has got two seeds in it. And one of them seeds'll come up—like you plant it this fall and it'll come up next spring. And the other berry'll come up the next spring—eighteen months. Now that's what he's always told me. He's always growed it and had it and fooled with it all of his life, and that's what he's always told me.

"Now the very best time to dig it is after it comes the first frost. From then till the leaves falls off of it. It's a bright yellow then, and it's a different cast of yellow from anything else in the woods, and you can tell it just as far through the woods as you can see it. But it's a short time to dig it in then. You ain't got long to dig it.

"When you dig it, you've got to scratch and get the dirt away from the roots and get it out. You can scratch down to where you can get ahold of it and catch hold of it and pull it and pull all the main part of the root out—unless it happens to be a quick crook in it or something. Then it'll break. But if it's just a straight root, you can catch and pull it, but you'll lose every bit of your little feed roots—the fine stuff. It makes it look awful rugged. You've just got a old big stubby root. If you take just a *little* more time and get all those fine roots out, then boy, it really makes it look good.

"Just dig out from around it. Well, you take on the mountainsides lots of times, the ground's loose, you know. You can just take your two hands—just run them down in the ground and just might' near lift feed roots and everything out at one time. But a lot of times it's in hard ground, too, and you've got to take a stick and prize and work and dig it out. Most sang diggers uses sticks. Some of them uses a little old something like a garden mattock, you know, like women use around in their flowers. Right light where they can use it in one hand and dig. But the majority of sang diggers just use a stick—just run it down under there and put one hand down here at the top of the ground and prize down on it, you know, and you can break a pretty good little tree root; and just lift the dirt up and that loosens it, you know, and you can just lift it right out.

"Now I've got out here in Mr. Tom Grist's pasture, and I've got ~~out~~ over there sometimes right early in the spring when it first comes up before they turn the cattle in there and dig it then and bring it over here and transplant it. Sometimes it'll grow on, and sometimes it'll die down. I guess if a body took enough pains with it—took and watered it like you would when you set out tater plants—it would probably live and grow right on that spring. But I always just take and bring mine in and set it out, and if it lives [that spring], it lives; if it don't, why, it don't. Most of it'll come back the next spring anyway. I usually use a haverpoke. It's just a satchel with a strop goes across your shoulder—swings down on your side. And that don't

skin up your roots so bad. If you put many of them in your pockets, you know, and you crawling around through the woods under logs and over logs and that, you skin all your little bitty feed roots up and they won't grow then. I usually just take mine and just dig it and stick the root right down in the haverpoke and leave the top sticking up and bring the whole thing back in and transplant it. That's better than berries. Even with a two-prong bunch, look how many years you're ahead of yourself there. At least three. And if it's not rich ground, maybe five or six years—maybe ten years ahead of yourself.

"But I bring it all home, and scratch a hole down just a couple inches below the topsoil, put it in there and cover it back up. Now you can take the bud out of a big bunch—where it's got a little fine feed root on it, you know, which it's bad to have; most all big sang has got a little feed root or two on it—and you can dig all those little feed roots out on that bud and break it off and reset it and it'll grow and make another bunch. Put feed roots, bud and all.

"And it'll come up every year if they don't nothing knock the top off or bother it. It'll come up the next year. You can dig it this spring when it first comes up and take and transplant it and lots of times the top'll die and you won't see no more sign of it that year. But then the next spring the majority of it'll come back up. Sometimes it won't. It'll dry up if those

PLATE 238 Minyard Conner's shaded sang patch.

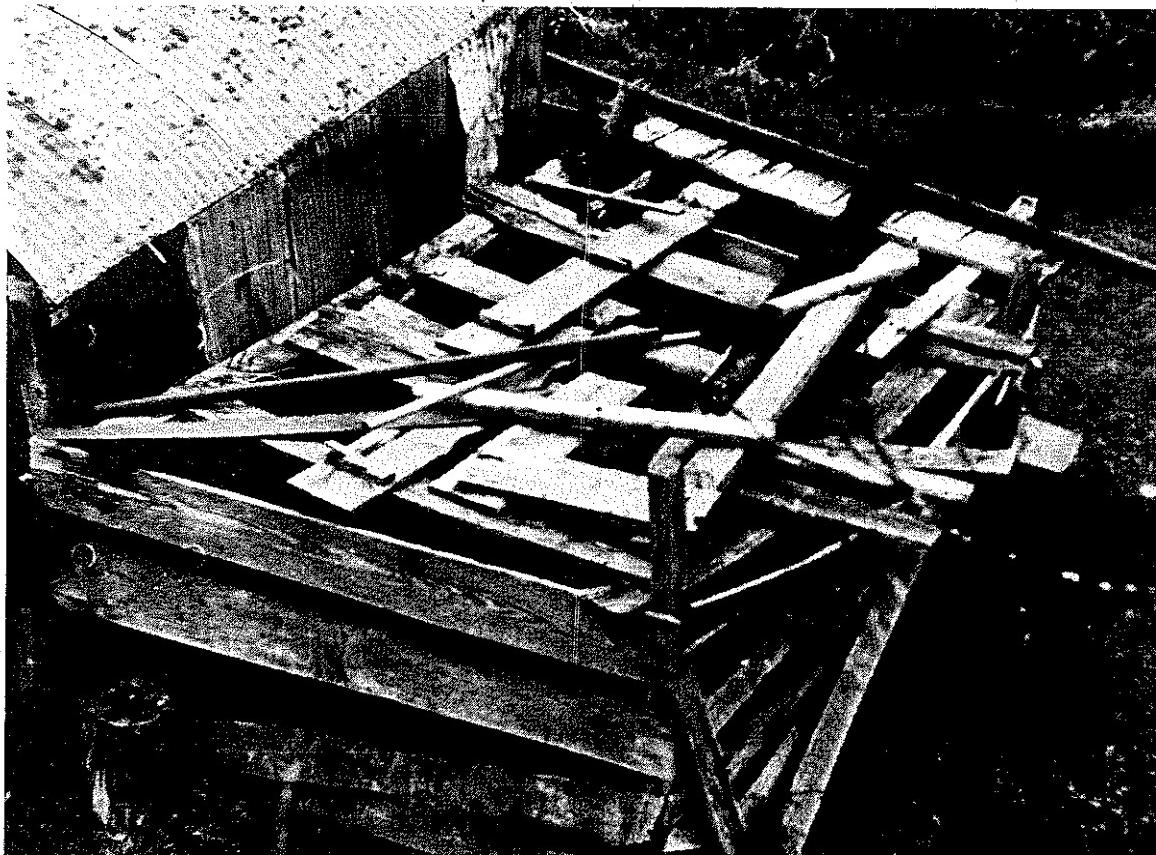




PLATE 239 Minyard Conner showing Cary Bogue and Steve Waters his cultivated sang patch.

feed roots don't take ahold or something, and it won't come back up. Or you might have it too deep. It can't be too far under your topsoil."

Minyard Conner has a bed of ginseng under a shed tacked onto the side of his garage [see Plates 238, 239, 240]. As proof that the sang needs moisture, he points to the drip line from the garage roof: "See where the water's run off the shed here? It's growed so much better around here."

He always either plants the berries he finds back, or brings them home and plants them just under the ground in his bed. In the woods, "Pick them and just sling them everywhere where they'll be hard to find! Put two or



PLATE 240 Minyard Conner dug one small plant from his patch to show us the size of its root.

three back where you dug, but sling the other ones. Leaves'll cover'em up."

Minyard is one of the few men we talked to who believed that it might be possible to make a living out of ginseng: "If you had a acre of ginseng, and you dug a quarter-acre every year, that's all you'd ever want. Yeah. Make a living on it. Set it out close together. Dig a quarter-acre every year. Now wouldn't that be nice?"

"But what about if you got up some morning and looked in there and your whole [bed had been dug]. You'd feel sick at your stomach *then*, wouldn't you?"

ENEMIES

Sang has a number of different kinds of enemies ranging in size from mice to men. Mice, squirrels and many birds eat the berries. Moles eat the roots. A blight attacks the stem and leaves; and people sometimes dig the roots at the wrong time of year, or transplant them incorrectly.

The berries, ripe in the fall of the year, tempt smaller animals. Lake Stiles said, "Little old woods mice eat them. I've had thousands of them climb up on that stem and cut the seeds off and sit up there and eat them."

Wallace Moore agreed: "Squirrels'll eat them. Rats is *bad* to eat them. And pheasants is bad to eat them. That's what the hunting book calls grouse, but we always called them pheasants. When mast is especially scarce, squirrels'll get into them. They eat the berries. And rats'll climb right up the stem of it and cut that little old seed pod off—cut it off to where they can get the berries, you know."

Worse than squirrels and mice are the moles which eat the roots and thus kill the plant. Almost everyone is afraid of the damage they can do because it is permanent. Wallace Moore said, "Moles is awful bad on sang. They'll eat the root, a mole will. If you ever plant it in a bed, you don't want to plant it in a straight row because a mole, if ever one time he finds a root here, he'll just take right out and he'll just take right out the row until he eats it all up. The only thing I know that you could do would be take this coarse wire—half-inch mesh or something like that—and just dig down deeper than a mole would run and fence you off a streak with it is the only way I know that you could keep a mole out of it. They usually run right close to the top of the ground, you know, 'cause he's got to bust up to get through. I started to fence my bed off up there one time—me and my wife did—and got some wire, but it run into too much work!"

Buck Carver is also afraid of moles. "Oh, boy. Dad Jim they just love them roots like nobody's business. They'll eat them. Maybe I can get a mole trap or two and set around that patch and have better luck with it. I just haven't give it the care and attention that I ought to have."

Blight is one of the more mysterious enemies. No one seems to know what causes it, or whether or not the damage is permanent. Every single contact suspected that too much sun was the real culprit, but they differed widely as to whether or not they felt the roots were harmed.

Lake Stiles said, "Blight on lots of other things will kill the roots, you know. But now as far as ginseng, I don't know whether or not it'll kill the roots or not. I have some ginseng up here that has lived through the blight for two years. I don't know whether it'll live through another year of it."

Buck Carver told us that the blight had hit his bed the last three years in

succession. "Last year I got a whole bunch of fresh roots and berries and planted a new patch and hope to have it come right on better this time. That blight made scabs on the roots, and eventually it'll eat the root up."

Wallace Moore described it vividly: "The leaf looks like you'd put hot water on it. It just turns black and just looks like it's cooked. It hit mine year before last, and I went and dug part of my bed. I was talking with Lester Davis and Buck Caryer and them, and they said, 'Well, wouldn't never do no good after the blight hit it. Said it shedded them feed roots. Little feed roots come off of it.'

"Well, I never said much about it. I just listened to them talk, mainly. I had a big bed and it really had the blight. And I come on home and me and my wife got talking about it. I said, 'Well, I just as well go dig what I can find of that in my bed 'cause if them feed roots comes off; it ain't going to do no good nohow.' And I went up there, and it hadn't hurt the root a bit in the world. Only just the tops dead. The little feed roots was on there. But I went ahead and dug a whole bunch of mine. But all that I missed come up the next year and put berries and all on last year. But now *this* year the blight hit it again, and boy it really hit it hard too." Wallace is just waiting to see what will happen this spring.

People, of course, are another threat entirely. They either dig the plant in such a way as to endanger the species, or they can find a patch that a man has in the woods and clean him out in an afternoon. Sometimes they have even been known to sneak into a man's yard when he was away and dig all that he had in his bed. We talked to several people that had had that happen to them at one time or another, and they were understandably bitter about it. One man told us, only half in jest, that he protects his with a shotgun now.

Wallace Moore, who has no beds near his home, was more philosophical about loss: "I wouldn't want to catch nobody in a bed that I might put out around my home here digging it on my own property, but if you've got a bed out here on government land and somebody gets into it, why, it's as much his as it is yours. Ain't nothing you could say about it without causing a row about it, and ain't no need in causing no row about it."

"I had a *big* patch in between here and Mud Creek Gap up here—people around here knows it as the Homer Sawmill—Homer Grist and them had a sawmill up there. Big flat rich place, and it's on south ground, but it's rich and flat. Just a poplar thicket. And I took and sowed sang all in there, and I'd take and dig up little roots and scatter them around in there. And _____ got into it and cleaned it out about two years ago. I never have said nothing to him about it. He never has mentioned it to me and I never have mentioned it to him. As much his as it was mine. Only I planted it and he got it. That's all."

"Now I get in these little out of the way places where there's not anybody hardly goes, you know."

So growing ginseng turns into something of a perilous way to make a living, but at the prices they're paying now . . .

DEALERS

When it comes to the actual buying and selling of sang, it seems almost as though there's a contest of sorts going on; something along the lines of a "let's see who's going to beat whom this time." Sellers claim the dealers short them in weighing the roots. Dealers claim the sellers are trying to cheat *them* just about any way they can (by mixing cultivated with wild roots, for example). It goes around and around.

To some extent, the dealers are certainly right. Usually operating as middlemen out of their own homes and with their own capital, they're taking a certain risk anyway. Then they must face sellers like the one who shall remain nameless who told us: "I dry it [to sell]. You can put it anywhere to dry. You can just put it in the house and it'll dry, but it won't dry fast. I usually put mine in a car body. You roll all your glasses [windows] up, you know; leave your glasses all rolled up and put it in the back there where the sun'll shine through that glass and hit it? It'll more'r'less cook it. It'll dry that outside so fast that the inside won't be dry, but still the outside'll be hard. That makes it weigh heavy. You don't lose so much weight. That's the way, I've dried mine, now, for the last four or five years."

Another contact, however, sees dealers as ripe to be beat since they're cheating too: "That one dealer won't talk to you much. He's got secrets he don't want to give away, I reckon. I've seen five or six thousand dollars' worth of sang in there at a time. He gets price quotations from New York at least every other day, and knows just how much to give for that. He's a shrewd trader. He'll talk you out of a few ounces and you standing there looking at him.

"Me and Byron Kelly one time went over there and carried some to him and he got to telling us about how he had certain days he'd go down to Bryson City and buy sang, and then certain days he'd be in Sylva and buy sang. And a lot of them Indians and half-Indians [from the Cherokee reservation near Bryson City, North Carolina], they'd dig the dickens out of that stuff. They ain't supposed to get it in that park in the Smokies, but they've got ways they can slip in there without the Park rangers knowing about it—and they's *plenty* of sang in them Smokies. So he said he was buying there in Bryson City one day, and he said they was just lined up. Big

line of people. And he had his little old scales there and he'd just weigh that stuff. Quick as one man was out of the way, he'd grab the next, throw in on the scale, figure it up, pay him off, gone. And he said they was a tourist standing there watching. And after while, when the rough got over, this Florida man stepped over to him and said, 'I been a'standing here watching you for an hour or more buying and weighing, but there's one thing I still don't understand, and that's how you can do it so fast and still be accurate.'

"Well, that dealer looked over at him and said, 'I just weigh it pretty close, and then I give a little or take a little. And usually I take!'"

So who's beating whom? Hard to say. And really probably inconsequential in the long run. In the old tradition of horse trading, it all evens out. Meanwhile, the reputed sharp eye of the dealer adds pages to the folklore surrounding the plant.

"As big a root as ever I dug . . ."

Sang hunters, just like deer hunters, coon hunters, treasure hunters and fishermen are full of stories. Phrases such as, "One time me and . . .," or, "The biggest root I ever found . . ." lead usually into tales of triumph or exceptional good fortune.

"One of the biggest roots," said Buck Carver, "I ever found in my life—now if you happen to find one on a little red ridge, it'll usually be a darn good root [because] it grows slow and it grows big—I was a searching for it in a little cover right over there forty years ago, I guess. And this little dark holler, it was still on north ground but it had got up high enough to where the earth was beginning to get red, you know—red clay. And right on top of that darn ridge there was a stalk—it wasn't more than twelve inches high I don't guess—was broke over, was laying with the top pointed down the hill. And I straightened it up; I don't know whether something run again' it and broke it over or whether the weight of the pod of berries had broke it or what. Maybe the wind blewed it over. And I flew loose to digging that darn thing and it was the biggest root I ever got in my life over that small a top."

PLATE 241 A box of dried ginseng roots as delivered for sale to a dealer near Sylva, North Carolina.





PLATE 242 Buck Carver with a handful of roots he dug this fall.

"And then me and _____ was digging some over there in a cove near Mulberry one day. We'd been down in the' nicest little flat you ever seen there; north ground, and dark and rich. Found just a few small bunches. And we come up over a bluff right up where we could look down over, and I looked back down there and away up in the air stood a ball of berries as big as a golf ball, looked like. And I said, 'Good God, do you see what I see?'

"And he said, 'What do you see?'

~~"And I said, I think I see the durndest stalk of ginseng down there that I've ever found."~~

"And I pointed the berries out to him and he said, 'Do you reckon that is sang?'

"I said, 'Won't take us a minute to find out.' And we walked back down there, and surely it was. And we'd stomped all around it, you know, hunting for low, short sang; and it was so durn high we just overlooked it there. I forget how many berries they was in that ball. Seemed to me like it was just a few over a hundred, and nearly every one of them with two little berries in it. You know most of it has it thataway. Most of it has two berries to the pod.

"The oldest one I ever dug had about twenty-seven of them wrinkles on that stem. Now I talked to a Greek about that—that was back in 19 and 34 when I was talking to this Greek—and he told me that he had one with two more rings on it than that, which would have been twenty-nine. But he said them kind of plants was very few and far between. Now where I got this root with the twenty-seven wrinkles on it was where my grandfather liyed at one time in a place called Pine Gap Cove way up on Darnell Creek, and he had planted out a garden of the stuff. And I was over there in the summer of '34 and found a few stalks of it. And when the berries got ripe, I went back over there and planted the berries back and dug the biggest stalks. And one of them was the one with the twenty-seven wrinkles on his stem. And he had a heck of a root too. I don't know. I don't guess there's any of that sang left there anymore."

Wallace Moore has found as many big ones as anyone around. "As big a root as ever I dug, I dug up here a year or two ago. I don't remember the weight of it, but it was bigger [around] than my pipe [bowl], and nearly eight inches long.

"And I've found some double-deckers. They'll come up and they'll be a big bunch of berries here, and then right in the middle of that, they'll be another little stem run up and have a smaller bunch of berries on top of that. And they usually got little leaves around that. But you don't find it too often. That's about as big a one as I've ever found. I don't know how old it would have to be. It's got to be in awful rich ground. A young bunch might make a double-decker after it got up big enough to have berries on it, if it was in rich enough ground, but it would have to be in awful rich ground. The only ones that I've ever seen—and I never have seen many of them but I've seen a few—was in awful rich ground—usually loose, rich ground.

"But we was bad to hunt. Me and my daddy used to set in up here on the head of Wolf Creek and we'd hunt plumb around Bettys Creek through here. And back then we'd walk and come up Keener Creek and drop across in on the head of Bettys Creek and hunt all day, and then go back in home by night.

"One time me and _____ was hunting. And I kept a climbing higher on the mountain. He had his little boy with him that day. And I kept getting higher—wanting to get on up towards the top. And he said, 'Oh,' said, 'we're getting too high, we're getting too high.' Well, we wasn't finding any—just a bunch here and yonder scattered around. But it was good, rich ground, and I just kept a wanting to get on up there because I knew that so many people that'll dig down in these coves won't get up around right under these tops and up in these roughs. And lot a'times it'll be rich above these roughs a ways, you know.

"And about the time we got up into the edge of the roughs, why, I found,

I believe it was seven bunches on one rock—little flat place on a rock kind'a like this room here; you know. And I come right around under the rock, and I seen a little one-prong bunch and one or two little two-prong bunches right up just by the side of the rock. Got to looking, and I thought well, now, them *seeds* has got to come from somewhere. And I just turned around and looked up in that little flat place and my face was right up in it! And I believe it was seven bunches if I ain't mistaken. It was right up in that one little flat place in that rock there. And then on out up on the rock, the dirt wasn't over a inch thick, I don't guess. Well, you could just take and lift the dirt up off the rock, you know, root and all, and just pull the root out from in under it then.

"And he come on up to me. I told him about it. Well, they was going around below me just on out in front of me, and I whistled at them and they kind'a come back. And his little boy begin wanting t'get a drink—wanting some water. That suited [his father] pretty well anyhow because he was wanting to get back down in the cove further. They wheeled and took back down. I told 'em I was going to get a little higher and see if I couldn't find some more up there. So I just turned right back around the way we'd come, but I was way in *above*—right around through the roughs—I could see up on the top of the mountain from where I was at part of the time. And I dug over a pound right around through there [along] with those scattered bunches I'd dug that morning.

"I gôt away back around under the side of the mountain out there in the roughs, and I heered them down in the cove right below me, and I looked and I seed them and hollered at them—asked them if they was finding any. And they said they wasn't. And I said, 'Well, come on up here. There's plenty of it up here.' They come on up there and we dug on back around till it was time to come out that afternoon—which wasn't very long after they got up there. An hour or two, I guess.

"But there's so many days you put in that you don't find that. That just happened to be a lucky streak there."

Buck Carver claims that there are lots of places back in the woods where people have set out berries, and then either moved away or forgotten about them. They're there now for anyone to find. "Lord, there's patches of it planted back in them woods that people have planted in unsuspecting places [and never gone back to].

"Nearly everyone hunts on north ground in dark coves, you know, and lots of times a feller plants it back, he'll plant it on south ground. That's how come it's in Laney Cove there on Kelly's Creek.

"In 1937, we was making whiskey up there at the east end of them cliffs

in what was called 'Stillhouse Cove,' and I come down there one day to see about the beer and see how near ready to run it was, and I dug several roots and got a good pocket of berries, and I went right out through the Gap—Stillhouse Cove Gap—between Kelly's Creek and Mud Creek and down in the head of Piney Cove there—some good dark rich earth there, and walnuts growing in that earth too. So I crawled off in down below the road and reached up and transplanted them roots that I dug up and planted out that bunch of berries. And I checked on it pretty good there for several years, and it was coming along fine. And then I forgot it.

"About twelve years ago, I was making liquor over on Kelly's Creek and stumbled onto the durn stuff walking out the road one day. And I thought, 'Well, good God Almighty, what in the world are you a'doing here?' Big old stalk, you know. Big ball of red berries. And another step, another big one or two. And, 'Oh, yeah. Heck, yeah. I remember now. I planted you here!'

"So I dug a root or two—I didn't try to dig it for market [but] I ought to have—and I forgot it again then.

"About three or four years ago, one of my wife's son-in-laws said something about that patch of sang over there—did I know it was there. I says, 'I ought to know it's there. I *planted* the durn stuff.' And I went over there that fall to dig some of it and put in my garden here, and some feller had been in there just ahead of us and he'd dug all the big pretty sang they was there that he could find. And there'd be the tops down on the ground, and big balls of berries. He'd never planted the durn berries back.

"Well, sir, that made me so durn mad I couldn't hardly see. I gathered every durn berry, and went to digging the little stuff then. Dug every durn thing I could find and brought it on over here and transplanted it in the garden.

"But now it don't all come up every year. I went back over there for two or three falls and found more. You can't get it all. I don't care how much—that Raven Rock Mountain there has been sanged to death as far back as I can remember. When I was eight years old, I went to digging sang on that mountain, and I've dug it off and on ever since, and they's *still* some there that ain't been found. I went up there this fall for a little while one day and found several roots and brought them and the berries in here and planted them in that garden."

"The biggest one I ever found," said Lawton Brooks, "was a five-prong bunch. Had the biggest root on it that I ever saw on one. [The plant] was at least up to my waist. I was a'standing, and I didn't know too much about it then. My wife's brother, he knows it, and he was letting me help him look for some. And he was digging it. He gave me a top to go by, and I

was a'looking at the top and then a'looking to see if I could see anything like it. There ain't nothing else like it if you ever get used to it. Now I can find it. I can spot it just anywhere. Anyway, I was standing there, and there was a big old wad of berries as big as my fist there, a'stickin' right up by my side, and I commenced hollering for him, and he come up there and said that was the biggest bunch he ever seen. So he dug it for me. I let him get it out. He was feared I'd break it. So he dug it for me and I took it on down there to the store, and that old man gave me a dollar and a half for it. Now that one root would bring a man ten or fifteen dollars because it's about sixty-five dollars a pound this year. It's higher than it's been a'being.

"Now as good a patch as ever I got into was that one that I found over in North Carolina. I got about forty-eight dollars worth that I dug and I wasn't over two hours. That's as good a patch of wild as ever I found in one place, and I didn't cover no territory. I didn't dig any further than from here to that filling station out yonder [about a hundred yards]. I just went backwards and forwards across the holler for a little piece, and I went up next to where the cliff was, and then I looked back down and I'd missed some and I went up, found some, and I went back down, and I come out. There might have been more below than there was above, but I ain't been back. But hadn't a'been nobody there in years digging no sang there. They'd a'been sure—they couldn't a *kept* from digging a whole lot in there. And I ain't been back. That's the reason I been wanting to go back so bad now. If I could get back in that place over there now and take my time and spend a couple of days over there, I could get a *pile* of that blasted stuff 'cause I know some places over there—them old hollers I used to hunt in when I was an old boy and lived there—I hunted in there all the time. I *know* where them old hollers is. I could get in there and I could *find* some ginseng.

"I like to hunt it, myself. It's interesting. You get to hunting for it, it's *interesting*, boys. You just take a liking to it. Same way by bee hunting. I like to bee hunt. I ain't got no use for them when I find them, but I just like to find the bee trees. I know where four or five bee trees is now. But I wouldn't get stung for *all* of them. I'm afraid of them cussed things. They run me crazy!

"But that sang's turning yellow right now. The berries are ripe right now on it. I ain't felt like it or I'd be going. Right now's the best time. Yes, sir. The berries are red as they can be. There's people in the woods today somewhere r'nother hunting it like the devil right now, I'll bet you. I've talked to several said they've been out. They go and camp out—stay a week at a time back in the woods and just do nothing but get up every morning and start again. Hunt a new territory every time. But I can't climb the mountains like I used to or I'd be right out there with them. I get out of

breath too quick. But if I had the air, I'd be right out there with them, climbing around them rough places."

If ginseng is getting scarcer in the mountains, and it seems to be, it still hasn't diminished the number of people who hunt for it. They all have their stories—and their dreams. As Wallace Moore said, "One day I dug a big havepoke full out of each of my beds and *then* didn't dig it all. Boy, that's a pretty sight to see where it's out like that. Or run into it. Walk up and see big wads of berries just scattered all over the side of the hill and in the holler. Well, I reckon it's about every sang hunter's dream—everybody that's ever dug the sang or fools around with it any—is always a looking for a patch where he can dig maybe two, three hours, three, four hours, or a half-a-day in one patch. Everybody you see: 'Boy, if I could just find a patch where I could dig a half-a-day, I'd be all right!'

"But *them* patches are scattered."

SUMMER AND FALL WILD PLANT FOODS

This chapter continues, and concludes, a section begun in *Foxfire 2*. In that book, we discussed wild plant foods that could be gathered and eaten in the spring. This chapter does the same for those of the summer and fall.

All the plants mentioned grow easily in, and are native to, our part of the mountains, and were used traditionally in the ways noted. Any recipes that turned up whose actual use we could not verify with our older contacts were simply left out of the chapter.

Although the recipes call for the use of sugar, honey or sorghum are both acceptable substitutes, except for fancy cakes or light pastries. Some rules of thumb follow: 1) Both honey and sorghum may be used with preserves or canned fruits such as apples, peaches, and pears. The preserves will taste better and sweeter than if sugar is used, and less of each can be added (sweeten to taste). 2) Honey is excellent in breads and other yeast doughs. 3) Sorghum is best used in dark cakes such as apple cake, and will impart a ginger or caramel flavor. It is also good for sweetening apple butter—sweeten to taste and then add cinnamon or other desired spices.

Once again, we have been aided by Marie Mellinger, who has checked our information and added the proper botanical names, and by Carol Ruckdeschel, who has provided us with drawings of many of the plants.

CANNING AND PRESERVING

Making jams or jellies became popular after glass jars became available for canning and preserving. Before that, fruits and berries were dried or made into strawberry or peach leather. Drying fruits and berries called for patience and a great deal of sunlight, or an oven large enough to hold trays of fruit.

In the early days of jelly-making, the mountain women did not have Certo or Sure-jel, and used green fruit along with the ripe to make jelly “jell” or thicken. The tart little wild crabapples were often added to

blackberries or blueberries. A fruit acid also was made up for this purpose by dissolving 1 3/4 ounces tartaric acid in three cups water. Pour this over three quarts mashed, sour-tasting fruit, and let stand twenty-four hours. Strain the fruit, and add one pound sugar to each pint of juice, stirring constantly until the sugar is dissolved. Bottle the juice, but don't seal the jars tightly for several days. This juice (two tablespoons in each batch) may be added to juices that need more tartness to make jelly. Or make a blackberry acid by adding one gallon blackberries to a quart boiling water. Let the berries stand six hours, then pour off and strain. To each quart juice, add one ounce tartaric acid. To each pint of this juice, add 1 1/3 pounds sugar. As soon as the sugar dissolves, bottle the juice and seal the bottles with paraffin. Add these juices to berry juices to make jelly when acid is absent in the berries.

Mrs. Cora Ledbetter gave us these directions her mother and grandmother had used for making jellies.

"Fruit for jelly should never be fully ripe; some fruits must be almost green. There are exceptions to this rule, but very few. It is important in jelly-making that the fruit be used in the proper stage of ripeness, as no amount of cooking will make jelly of over-ripe fruit, and if too green, the flavor of the fruit is lost. It is also necessary that good, sound fruit be used to make clear, firm jelly. A porcelain kettle is always best, but a brass kettle (if it's kept bright) or a new tin pan will do.

"When the fruit is being cut, it should be kept in clear water until ready for use; then it should be taken from the water, placed in the kettle, and covered with fresh water, as the fruit is apt to have colored the first. Keep the kettle covered, and steam the fruit until it's perfectly tender, as you wish to get the juice from the fruit without breaking or mashing it more than is necessary. When ready to strain, pour in a jelly bag; hang it up and let it drip; don't squeeze.

"It is best to boil the juice a few minutes before adding the sugar. Speed is necessary if the natural flavor of the fruit is to be retained and the jelly is to be bright and clear. The jelly should "make" in twenty to thirty minutes from the time the sugar is added, and it should be skimmed all the time it is boiling. The best way to tell when it is ready is to drop a little from the spoon into a cup of cold water. If it goes to the bottom and forms a ball, it is ready to be taken from the fire. Another way to test its readiness is to let a small quantity cool on a perfectly dry surface; if ready, it should form a jelly.

"After pouring the jelly into the jars or jelly glasses, let them stand in the sun several hours. Then place papers, dipped in brandy, on the jelly and cover, or use paraffin or tins.

"Never cover the jelly jars with the tins until the jelly is thoroughly

cooled, otherwise the moisture from the warm jelly will cause the tops to rust. The jelly should be kept in a dry place.

"To clarify jelly, beat the white of an egg and put it in the juice when the sugar is added; when it boils up as if it would boil over, take it from the fire and pour in a tablespoonful of cold water. After the ebullition ceases, put it on the fire again. Repeat this, then strain through a jelly bag, return to the fire, and let it boil until it jellies."

To can berries, select those that are ripe and firm. Put them in jars filled with cold water; have the rubbers on the jar lids and place the tops on loosely. Place the jars in a can, or any deep vessel, in which a heavy, folded cloth or rack has been placed. Fill the can with water to within an inch of the top of the jars, put it on the stove, and let the water in the can boil three minutes. Tighten the tops of the jars, remove them from the heat, and let cool. When cool, tighten the tops again. A cup of sugar may be added to each half gallon of berries when they are first put in the jars. Care should be taken to have them well sealed before packing them away, and they must be kept in a cool place.

BERRIES AND FRUITS

White mulberry (*Morus alba*) (family Moraceae)

The white mulberry was introduced to this country at an early date to help promote the silkworm industry. Silkworm culture never became very successful, but the mulberries remained, spreading naturally throughout the area. It is a small tree with shining leaves, rather rough to the touch and varying in form from whole, ovate to mitten-shaped to deeply cut or incised. Greenish catkins in early spring are followed by whitish or pinkish fruits of a rather insipid taste. Birds love them and a white mulberry tree will attract numerous bird species. The fruits are considered edible, but inferior to those of the red mulberry. Dried white mulberries were used as a substitute for raisins or figs.

Red mulberry (*Morus rubra*) (family Moraceae)

The red mulberry is a small, spreading tree rather common in the mountains, and often found around old homesites. Leaves are ovate, roughly hairy above, and softly hairy below. The fruits may be dark red, purple, or black. They have always been used for pies, preserves, jams, or jellies, and also make good wine.

Jake Waldroop told us that "mulberries ripen in June, about the first part. They're a long-shaped berry, usually an inch, or even two or three



PLATE 243 · Red mulberry

inches, long. The trees have a pretty blossom of a pinkish color. The mulberries are practically all red."

Mulberry candy: crush mulberries and mix with ground walnuts. Make small balls and roll in sugar.

Mulberry pie: cook mulberries, and drain. Mix with two beaten eggs, one cup cream, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar. Fill a pie shell and bake.

Wild gooseberry (*Ribes cynosbati*) (family *Saxifragaceae*)
(dog bramble, dogberry)

The wild gooseberry is a small shrub found in the rich coves, and on the rocky ledges and outcrops of the mountains. It has semi-trailing, very prickly stems four to six feet long, and slightly hairy three- to five-lobed leaves. Small yellow flowers are followed by reddish striped, prickly berries that are very sweet inside. Gooseberries were hard to find but prized for jams and jellies when available. Spiced gooseberries were served with roast fowl on special holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. They also make good pies and preserves. Cultivated English gooseberry, which has berries of a greenish color, sometimes persists around old house or garden sites.

Allegheny serviceberry (*Amelanchier laevis*) (family *Rosaceae*)
(serviceberry, sugarplum, shadblush, juneberry, currant tree, sarvis)

The service berry is an understory tree of the mountain woods. It has smooth gray bark, and rather crooked branches. Leaves are narrow and smooth, with slightly toothed edges. The flowers appear very early in the spring with the new leaf buds. Each individual blossom has five long white petals radiating from a greenish center. The red-purple berries are edible and sweet with a pleasant odor.

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*)
(serviceberry, lancewood, Indian pear, May cherry)

The Canadian shadblush grows on the higher mountains. Leaves are ovate, and the young leaves have a reddish color. The flowers are slightly pink and blossom with the opening leaves, somewhat later than the Allegheny serviceberry. Both trees are called "service" berries because their flowering branches were picked and carried into churches for the Easter service.

Berries of both species are equally good and are prized for sauces and pies. They can be canned, dried, or eaten raw. They should be picked before they are fully ripe.

Jake Waldroop told us a lot about serviceberries. "They ripen in June. They're good food for turkeys, squirrels, bears—practically all wild game love to feed on sarvis. They're a pale reddish color. Some sarvis trees will get very large. I've seen sarvis trees over a foot through. Most of them, though, are the size of your arm. You can't harvest the berries without hacking down the tree or getting somebody to climb up and bend the limbs over. The berries grow in a cluster. There'll be just whole wads of them. The sarvis trees grow back in the wilder mountains, back down the Nantahala River, around under Albert Mountain, Standing Indian, Ridgepole, along Laurel Creek and all those places. Sarvis trees grow along the water courses mostly. Sometimes you find 'em up on the mountainsides."

"The berries are just wonderful for pies. And you can just bend down a limb and stand there and eat 'till you almost tear yourself apart. They're sweet, got a good flavor. The sarvis can't hardly be beat for anything that grows wild in the mountains."

"The sarvis is a hardwood tree, almost as hard as any timber that grows. You can't cultivate them. They grow in the wilder country. They're the first thing that blooms in spring of the year."

All of our contacts agreed that it was hard to get the berries before the birds do. They're high up in the trees and their red color attracts the birds.

Serviceberry pie: heat one pint ripe berries and $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar and pour into a pie shell. Bake in a hot oven. (You may substitute serviceberries for blueberries in pie recipes.)

Serviceberry flan: three cups berries; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar; $\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour; $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups milk; pinch of salt; one tablespoon vanilla. Beat milk, sugar, flour, vanilla, and salt together. Pour half of the mixture in a baking pan. Heat one minute. Add the berries, then cover with the other half of the mix. Bake one hour at 350° .

Muffins: Add serviceberries to cornbread or corn muffins.

Black raspberry (*Rubus occidentalis*) (family Rosaceae)

(black cap, thimbleberry)

The black-raspberry appears as a native in cool mountain ravines, but is most common where it has escaped from cultivation and has naturalized in old fields and gardens. This black berry has very pale, long, arching canes, and finely cut, very soft green leaves, whitish on the underside. The fruit is small, usually purple-black in color, but sometimes appears in a pale yellow form. It is very sweet when fully ripe and highly esteemed for jelly or jam. Berries were often dried to preserve them for winter.

There are several varieties of these berries, all good for jellies, jams, etc. If very light jelly is desired, the pink or white varieties should be used, and the berries gathered just before they are ripe. For jam and dark jellies,

very ripe berries should be used. For preserves, gather the berries as for jelly. Ripe fruit is also desirable for wines and cordials. Fresh berries should always be used.

The leaves of the black raspberry are rich in vitamin C and were often dried and used for tea. Place several leaves in a cup of hot water and allow to stand ten minutes, then strain and serve with milk and sugar to make the tea.

Mrs. Mann Norton told us, "I like wild raspberries better than I do the tame ones. They've got lots more flavor. They used to be on our place up at the farm and we would go out and pick an eight-pound bucket full."

It has been suggested that they taste best eaten fresh with sugar and cream, but they also made a good berry drink. To make this, put berries in jars with vinegar, seal, and let stand one month. Strain through a sieve and put the juice in sterilized bottles. To use, dilute with cold water and sweeten with sugar.

Raspberry jelly: take $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon berries and boil them in one pint water until thoroughly cooked. Strain, and to one pint juice, add one pound sugar. Boil until it jellies, and pour into jars.

Raspberry preserves: gather the berries when they are almost ripe. Put $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon in a porcelain kettle with one pint of water. Boil ten minutes, or until the berries are tender. Drain off $\frac{2}{3}$ of the juice, add one pound of sugar for each pound of berries, and boil until the syrup is thick. Put in jars and seal while hot.

Raspberry pickles: wash $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon fresh, almost ripe, berries. Place them in self-sealing jars with a half teaspoon each of cloves and allspice, and one stick of cinnamon. Boil $1\frac{1}{2}$ pints of good apple vinegar with a half cup of sugar and pour over the berries. Seal while hot.

Raspberry vinegar: put two gallons ripe raspberries in a stone jar. Pour a gallon cider vinegar over them, and let stand twenty-four hours. Drain, then pour the liquor over a gallon fresh berries and let stand overnight. Strain and add one measure of sugar for every measure of juice. Boil and skim. Bottle when cold.

Wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*) (family Rosaceae)

(commonly called red raspberry in the mountains, strawberry-raspberry)

This berry was originally introduced from Japan, but has escaped from gardens and naturalized in the mountains. The wineberry has very long trailing, or arching, canes, with orange-red hairs along the stems. The tri-divided leaves are velvety to the touch and whitish on the underside.

White flowers with five petals are followed by bright red, translucent berries that taste delicious. They can be substituted for black raspberries, dewberries, or blackberries in any desserts.

Jake Waldroop described the wineberries. "They grow on a long, green vine, sometimes fifteen or twenty feet in length. The berry has a pretty round face, and is sorta hollow in the middle. They just about top them all for pies, preserves, and jellies. They really are good. There aren't too many of them around anymore. Where they build roads through the mountains or clear off a patch and don't cultivate anything, that's a good place for them to grow. Raspberries grow in bundles."

Aunt Lola Cannon says, "A wild raspberry is real red—the most beautiful color. They make a wonderful jelly because they're so tart and a beautiful jelly because of the color."

Dewberry (*Rubus flagellans*) (family Rosaceae)

The common dewberry is found in many habitats, from open woods to old fields and roadsides. It has long runners that creep along the ground and may be prostrate, or may send up shrubby shoots. Leaves are usually divided into three (sometimes five) sections, and turn a rich purplish-red very early in the summer. Berries are solitary, round, shiny black, and very seedy, but very good for jelly.

PLATE 244 Dewberry



Southern dewberry (*Rubus trivialis*)

The southern dewberry appears on road banks and in fields, with flat, creeping branches that extend up to twenty feet from the parent plant, and root at the joints. Leaves have five leathery leaflets with prickly leaf stems. The flowers are solitary, large, and often pink. The berries are good to eat, but seedy.

Florence Brooks told us, "They make a jelly with a flavor that you'll never forget. You don't need to add anything extra to make them jell. You pick them, wash them, cook them, and strain out all the seeds. You take a cup of sugar to a cup of juice, or a lot of people put two cups of sugar and three cups of juice. Boil it till it rolls."

"Before there were canning jars, jelly was just put in glass jars and a lid on it. Sometimes my mother took beeswax and a white cloth. She melted the wax and dipped that cloth down in it and put it right over that jelly. That'll keep it from molding, but if jelly molds, it doesn't hurt it a bit in the world. All you have to do is run you a spoon around it and get the mold off."

Dewberry frosting: cook berries and strain. Use one cup juice to one cup sugar and boil until it's thick. Add one beaten egg white and beat until it can be spread on cake.

Dewberry pie: one cup sugar; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour; dash salt. Fill a pastry shell with dewberries, sprinkle the mixture of sugar, flour, and salt over the top. Dot with butter and bake.

Blackberry (*Rubus argutus*) (family Rosaceae)

The common blackberry is found in old fields, under power lines, and where roads have been cut into the forest. It has very thorny stems which are either high and arching, or low and sprawling. The leaves have five leaflets and are a deep rich green in color. The fruit is black, juicy, and a prime favorite. Berries are eaten plain, or used for pie, jellies, preserves, cobbler, juice, wine, cake, and bread. Charlie Ross Hartley often saw them dried on strips of chestnut bark in the sun. They were then kept in sacks hanging from the rafters. When needed, the berries were soaked in water before their use.

All blackberries are rich in vitamin C, and blackberry leaves have been used for food. Mrs. Mann Norton said: "Brier leaves should be used when about an inch long, before they get tough. Wash and cut, boil and season, as you would any spring greens, or mix with lettuce or creases."

Blackberry leaves were also carefully dried for tea, used as a gargle, or swallowed to cure "summer complaint." A mixture of dried leaves and honey was a good medicine for a sore throat or thrush.

Blackberry cobbler: use one pint blackberries, sugar to taste, a small amount of butter, and enough biscuit dough for several biscuits. Cook the blackberries until they come to a boil. Add the sugar, then some butter, and cook until thick. Roll out the dough, cut as for biscuits, and drop into the blackberries. Roll some dough very thin, cut it into strips and place on top of the blackberries. Bake until the crust on top is brown.



PLATE 245 Blackberry

Blackberry syrup: one quart berry juice; one pint sugar; one teaspoon allspice; one teaspoon cinnamon; one teaspoon cloves; one teaspoon nutmeg. Mix ingredients and boil for fifteen minutes. Use over pancakes.

Blackberry flummery: one quart blackberries; $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups sugar; dash cinnamon; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup hot water; dash salt; two tablespoons cornstarch. Mix berries with water, sugar, salt, and cinnamon, and cook to the boiling point. Reduce heat and cook slowly until liquid begins to look slightly syrupy. Make a paste of cornstarch and three tablespoons water. Stir into berry mixture, cook until slightly thick. Serve cold.

Blackberry roll: biscuit dough; four cups blackberries; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon; two tablespoons melted butter or margarine; half cup honey; half cup sugar. Roll dough to $\frac{1}{3}$ -inch thickness, and brush with melted butter. Combine $\frac{1}{2}$ the berries with cinnamon and honey and spread them over dough. Roll as a jelly roll. Place in a large, well-greased pan. Surround with remaining blackberries and sugar. Bake at 425° for thirty minutes. Slice and serve from the pan.

Blackberry jelly: one quart berries crushed in a pan without sugar or water. Cook slowly eight minutes. Strain; measure; bring to boiling point. Add $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar to each cup juice gradually, so the boiling does not stop. Bring to a brisk boil, skim, and bottle.

Blackberry cordial: boil the berries until they will break into pieces, and strain through a bag. To each pint of juice, add one pound of white sugar,

a half ounce of mace, and two teaspoonfuls of cloves. Do not use ground spices. Boil for fifteen minutes. When cold, strain, and to each quart of juice add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of whiskey. Bottle and seal. Another recipe: Wash the berries and place in a tin vessel, with a teaspoonful each of cloves, allspice, and mace to each gallon of berries. Cover with brandy or whiskey, and let stand four or five days. Strain and add three pounds of sugar to each gallon of juice. Let it heat until the sugar is dissolved. Bottle and cork while hot, and keep in a cool, dark place.

Blackberry wine: cover the berries with boiling water and let them stand twelve hours. Strain and add two pounds sugar to each gallon juice. Put in jugs, taking care to keep the vessels full to the brim, so that as the juice ferments, the scum which rises may flow off. Jugs should be refilled every morning with juice from a smaller vessel kept for this purpose. Continue this for four or five days; then stopper the jugs loosely, and after ten days cork tightly. This will be ready to bottle and seal in four months. Instead of using hot water, as directed, one may squeeze the juice from the berries, and proceed at once, using one pound sugar for each gallon juice. For dry wine, wash and squeeze the juice from fresh, ripe berries. Pour the juice into jugs; keep them full to the brim for four or five days so that the scum may flow off, replenishing each day with juice kept for that purpose. This will be ready to bottle and seal in six months.

Jake Waldroop's recipe for blackberry wine: Gather six to eight gallons of wild blackberries, wash them well, and put them in a big container. Mix in five pounds of sugar, and then cover the top of the churn or container with a cloth, tied down so air can get in but insects can't. Let the mixture work for eight to ten days.

Then strain the mixture through a clean cloth, squeezing the pulp so that all the juice is removed. Measure the juice you have. For every gallon of juice, add one and a half pounds of sugar. Let it work off. When it stops (when the foaming and bubbling have stopped on top), strain it again; measure the juice, and again add one and a half pounds of sugar to each gallon of juice. When it finishes working this time, it is done and can be bottled. Jake keeps his in an earthenware jug with a corn cob stopper.

He makes grape wine the same way.

Blackberry nectar: select sound, ripe blackberries. Add the berries to 3 cups good vinegar in a crock or large jar. Cover the crock with cheesecloth and let stand three or four days, stirring daily. When ready, strain without crushing the berries. Measure, and add one pound sugar for each pint juice. Boil gently for five minutes. Put in bottles or jars and seal. When serving, dilute with water and crushed ice. Use less sugar if a tart drink is preferred.

Blackberry shrub: gather the blackberries, wash and select so that there

will be no sour or imperfect ones. Cover with apple vinegar (two years old) and cook until soft. Strain, and sweeten the juice to taste; boil down until it is about the consistency of thick syrup. Bottle and put in a cool, dark place. When serving, use three or four tablespoonfuls to a glass cold water.

Allegheny blackberry (*Rubus allegheniensis*)

This is the blackberry of the high mountains, whose blossoms and fruits appear late in the season. Canes are five to ten feet high, but almost thornless. Each of the five leaflets has a dark red leaf stem. Berries are long, shiny black, and sweet when fully ripe.

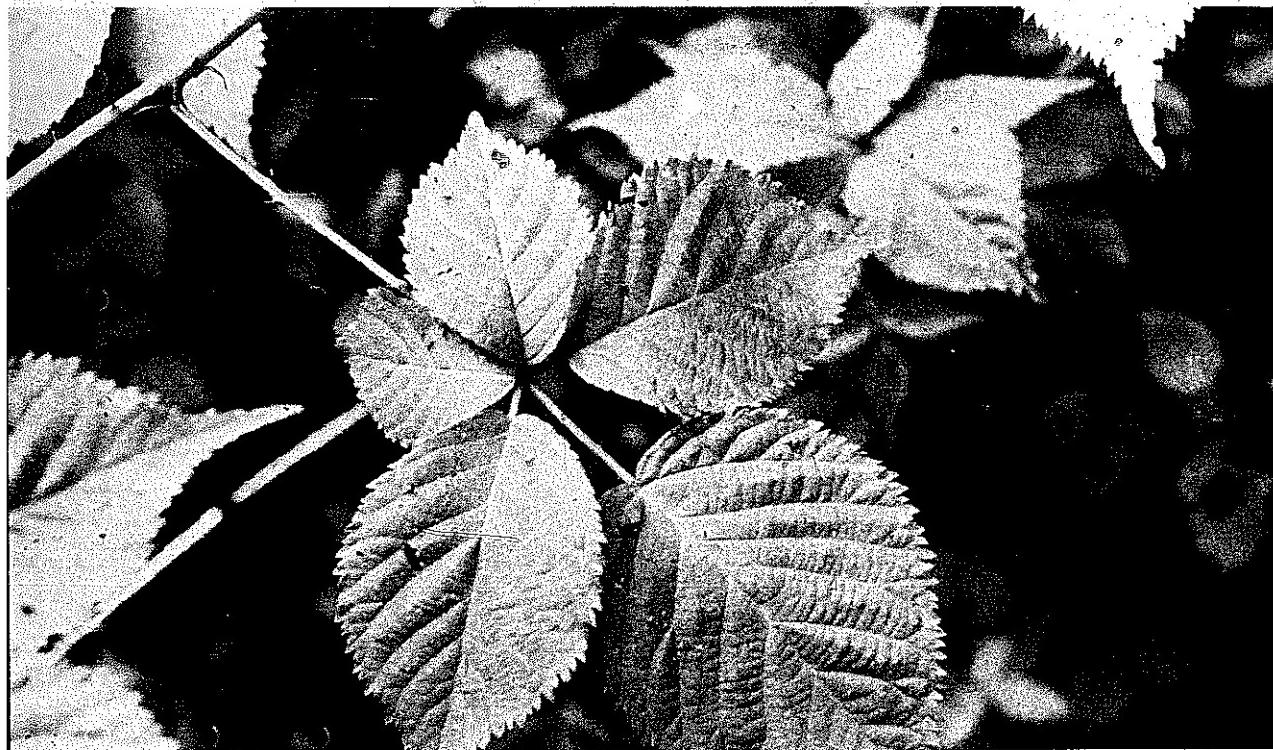


PLATE 246 Mountain blackberry

Swamp blackberry (*Rubus betulifolius*)

Swamp blackberry is found in thickets in low, wet places. It has high arching canes, five-part, dark green leaves, and very thorny stems. The berries are black and juicy, but rather sour to the taste.

Sumac (*Rhus typhina*) (family Anacardiaceae)
(shumate; lemonade tree)

A small tree of the mountains with crooked, velvety branches. Leaves are woolly-hairy, with 9-13 leaflets, which turn brilliant red in late autumn. Flowers are in large green clusters, followed by woolly red berries. The very similar smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*) has stems and smooth leaves, and leaflets which are pale on the underside. The very acid red fruits are used to make a pleasing summer drink. Someone told us, "The berries are rather sour, but can be eaten plain. They can be used in jelly to add tartness."

Sumac lemonade: crush berries; cover with boiling water; steep until well colored; strain through a cloth; sweeten with sugar or honey and serve cold. Prepare and serve at once, for the prepared lemonade will not keep. The lemonade not only tastes good, but is said to relieve fatigue and reduce fever.

Sumac and elderberry jelly: boil one pint sumac berries in three pints water until there is one quart juice (boil one quart elderberries in three pints water until fruit is soft). Mash. Strain juice through a thick white cloth. Mix, add one cup sugar for each cup juice and cook into jelly.



PLATE 247 Sumac

Buckberry (*Vaccinium erythrocarpon*) (family *Ericaceae*)
(mountain cranberry, deerberry, currant berry)

The buckberry grows on the higher ridges and along mountain trails and old roadways. It is a small shrub, three to five feet high, with green leaves and reddish stems. The leaves turn a reddish-yellow early in August. The small, reddish, bell-shaped flowers turn into shiny black berries, very tart, but pleasing to eat. They are a good thirst quencher when hiking in the mountains, or are good in pies or jelly and can be substituted for blueberries or huckleberries in any recipe.



PLATE 248 Buckberry

PLATE 249 Kenny Runion with buckberry.



Jake Waldroop told us, "Buckberries usually grow on high ground. They're a dark blue and pretty well the same size as blueberries. They grow in thickets—blueberry thickets. They get up about three feet high."

Florence Brooks suggested eating them with milk and sugar. "For a pie, clean and wash the berries and stew them with water and sugar—about a pint of water to a quart of berries. Then sweeten them to taste. If you want a dumpling pie, just cut the dough into squares and drop it into the stewed berries while the berries are boiling. I like to put my berries in a pan and cut the dough in strips and put them on top of the berries. Bake the cobbler in the oven."

Squaw huckleberry (*Vaccinium stamineum*) (family Ericaceae)
(gooseberry, dangleberry, tangleberry)

This is a spreading shrub common in oak-pine woods with very pale, gray-green leaves. The white, bell-shaped flowers are very pretty and hang down from the ends of the branches in the early spring. The glaucous green fruit hangs from a slender stem, hence the name "dangleberry." The berries are very sour until the time when they are fully ripe, late in the season. Few people enjoy them raw, but they make excellent sauce, jelly, and jam. Jake Waldroop told us that you hardly ever see gooseberries back in the north coves. "They're usually on the south ground, on the ridges and in flat woods. They're a round berry and there are white and red ones. The wildlife feed on gooseberries. They grow where you can pick just wads of them by the handful. When they bear, a bush will just be bowed over with them. You hardly ever see a gooseberry bush thicker [in diameter] than

PLATE 250 • Huckleberries



my thumb. They grow pretty tall and thick, and ripen mostly in September."

Sauce is made by cooking the juice or pulp with an equal weight of sugar. Serve cold.

Florence Brooks said that "some people like to stew them and eat them with cake. To stew them, you pick them and clean them like you do blackberries. Add sugar to sweeten to your own taste. Eat on pound cake, plain cake, any kind."

Fanny Lamb said, "Gooseberries are good to use in pies—like you would make a huckleberry or strawberry pie, or anything like that."

Gooseberry pie: mix two cups berries with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar and cook until thick, mashing berries. Make a plain biscuit dough. Roll it out and cut into one-inch-wide strips. Pour berries into a pie plate, place strips of dough crosswise on the berries, and bake at about 450° until the crust is brown.

Sparkleberry (*Vaccinium arboreum*)

The sparkleberry is a tall shrub or small tree found on rocky ridges in open oak-pine woods. It has a gnarled trunk, and very shiny, almost evergreen, oval leaves. It blossoms profusely in early spring, with very sweet-scented white, bell flowers. Berries are wine-red to black and rather dry and insipid. It is said they can be used for jelly or preserves, but they need plenty of sweetening.

High bush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*)

The high bush blueberry grows to twenty feet high in rich woods or rocky hillsides, usually in deciduous forests. It has smooth green elliptical leaves. Flowers are pinkish. The berries are blue and small and rather sour. They were often dried for winter use.

High bush black blueberry (*Vaccinium atrococcum*)

Another tall bush found on rich hillsides and in mountain coves. The twigs are hairy, and the leaves slightly toothed. Flowers are white and the berries are black. They are very good to eat, but are seldom found in large enough quantities for jellies or jams.

Low blueberry (*Vaccinium vacillans*)

This is the common blueberry of the mountains and piedmont, low-growing and colonial, found in open pine woods and along roads and



PLATE 251 Low blueberry

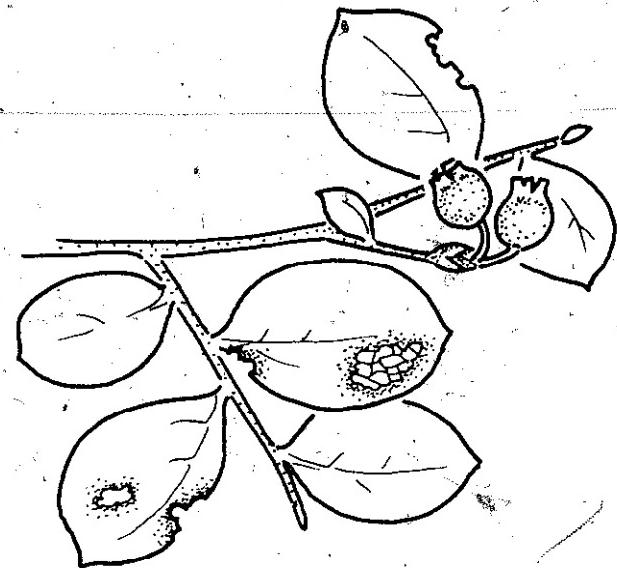


PLATE 252 Blueberry

trails. Greenish-pink bell flowers appear before the leaves in early spring. The berry is the familiar, good-tasting bright blueberry, prized for cooking. It can be dried for winter use.

The difference between blueberries and huckleberries is more than that of color, for there are blue huckleberries and black blueberries. In general, huckleberries each contain about ten large seeds, while a blueberry has many tiny seeds. Huckleberry leaves have glands that can be seen if a leaf is held up to light or examined under a pocket microscope.

Blueberry cobbler: cook berries for fifteen minutes over medium heat with one cup sugar. For dough use two cups flour and two tablespoons shortening. Roll the dough out thin, cut into long pieces, and place on top of berries in a pan. Let boil. Place in oven until crust browns.

Stewed blueberries: one quart of berries sprinkled with sugar. Cook gently without adding water.

Blueberry juice: cook berries; strain. Add dash of cinnamon or lemon and drink hot.

Hot blueberry sauce: simmer blueberries with cinnamon, nutmeg, sugar to taste, and a dash of lemon. Simmer until berries pop. Serve hot.

Blueberry dessert: one quart blueberries; two cups biscuit mix; $\frac{2}{3}$ cup milk; two tablespoons melted butter; two tablespoons sugar; $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cinnamon. Cook berries and drain thoroughly. Roll out dough, brush with melted butter, and spread blueberries over surface. Roll up and place seam side down in a greased baking dish. Bake in a hot oven (425°) about twenty minutes.

Blueberry fritters: mix up biscuit dough, add one well-beaten egg, sugar to taste, and one cup blueberries. Fill a small kettle with grease, melt, and drop in two or three fritters at a time, turning until they're brown. Dip out and sprinkle with sugar.

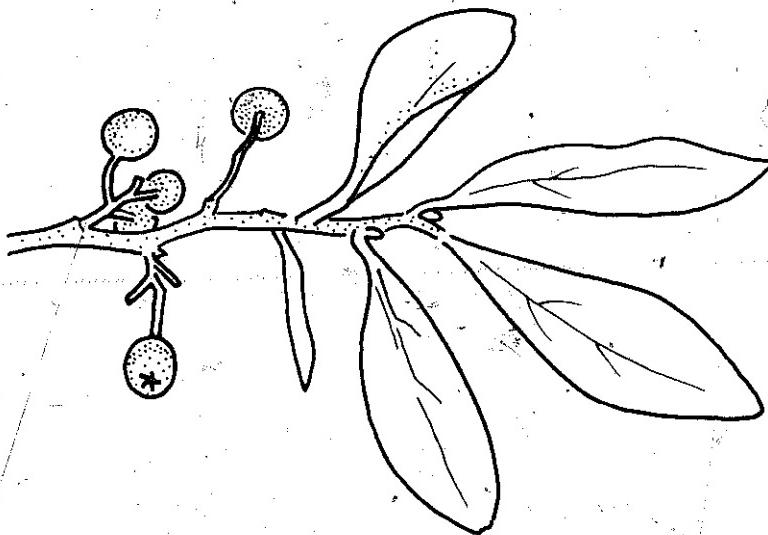
Blueberry crisp: four cups blueberries; $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar; four tablespoons butter; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar; $\frac{1}{3}$ cup flour; $\frac{3}{4}$ cup quick oats. Put berries in a baking dish, and sprinkle with sugar. Cream butter with brown sugar, blend in flour and oats with a fork. Spread over berries and bake.

Spiced blueberries: five pounds blueberries; six cups sugar; two cups weak vinegar; one tablespoon cinnamon; one tablespoon cloves; one tablespoon allspice. Tie spices in cheesecloth. Boil sugar, spices, and vinegar for ten minutes. Add berries, simmer ten minutes. Seal in hot, clean jars.

Bilberry (*Gaylussacia frondosa*) (huckleberry)

Bilberries are shrubs found on high, dry ridges. They have olive green, leathery leaves, resin-dotted on the underside, and pink flowers with opening leaves followed by dark blue, rather dry berries. Bilberries look much

PLATE 253 - Bilberry



like huckleberries, but they have a white color that gives them a "frosty" appearance. They're good raw, and in pies and jelly.

Huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*)

This huckleberry is a small shrub, which grows to four feet and has reddish stems and leaf stems. The leaves are shiny green and resinous. Flowers are reddish with the opening leaves and are also glandular. Berries are very shiny black, seedy, and very sweet.

Dwarf huckleberry (*Gaylussacia dumosa*)

Dwarf huckleberries grow in large patches, joined together by running roots. They are six to twelve inches high, with almost evergreen leaves. White flowers appear in early spring with the new leaves. The berries are black and very sweet. Box turtles often collect the entire crop.

Huckleberry is the common mountain name for all species of *Gaylussacia* and *Vaccinium*. They are also called wild blueberries, or buckberries, and are very similar to tame blueberries, but are a little larger, darker and more sour. They are eaten plain, with cream and sugar, or used in pies, preserves, jelly, or wine. They can be dried for winter use by spreading them thinly on a tray and placing them in the sun each day until dry—they should be ready in about a week. Store in tight containers.

Florence Brooks suggests adding a little rhubarb to huckleberry jelly. "I just don't believe huckleberries will make without Sure-jel or a little something sour added." Huckleberries may be put up in any way that dewberries are, but they require less sugar than other berries.

Huckleberry jam: wash the berries, put them in a kettle with a little water, and boil until tender. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ pound sugar to each pound fruit, and boil thirty minutes or until quite thick.

Huckleberry jelly: boil the berries in very little water until very tender; strain, and boil the juice five minutes. Then measure and add one pound of sugar to one and a half pints of juice. Return to the fire and boil twenty minutes. Jelly should always boil fast.

Huckleberry pickles: the huckleberry may be pickled just as the dewberries are.

Huckleberry puffs: one pint huckleberries; two cups flour; two teaspoons baking powder; one level teaspoon salt; two eggs; enough sweet milk to make a batter a little thicker than that used for cakes. Grease six or seven teacups thoroughly with butter. Fill them half full with the above mixture; place in closely covered steamer and steam one hour. The puffs will come out perfect puff balls. Serve with sauce. Puffs are spongy and absorb a great deal. Other fruits or berries may be used.

Huckleberry cake: one cup butter; two cups sugar; three cups flour; four eggs; $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk; two teaspoons baking powder; one teaspoon vanilla; one quart huckleberries. Cream butter and sugar; add eggs. Add milk and flour alternately, then add baking powder, vanilla, and berries. Bake in loaf pan in moderate oven (350°), forty-five minutes to one hour. Serve with butter and sugar sauce (light brown sugar) or eat as is.

Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)
(elderblow)

The elderberry is a tall shrub found in waste places, along streams, and in old garden spots. It has large leaves with many smooth, green leaflets. Often



PLATE 254 Elderberry in flower



PLATE 255 . . . and mature.

numerous stalks come up in a group. Bark is rather light brown and warty. Flowers appear in large, flat, fragrant clusters (*Plate 254*), followed by small, dark wine-red to black berries (*Plate 255*).

Elder flowers were brewed into a tea, said to be a blood purifier, or used as an alternative for aspirin, relieving pain and inducing sleep. The flowers were also brewed with chamomile or basswood to make a wash for the skin.

Flowers are also used for fritters or wine. Elderberries are used for cold drinks, wine, pies, preserves, and jellies. **BERRIES MUST BE COOKED BEFORE USING** as they are dangerous to some people if eaten raw.

Rufus Morgan told us that "we have the purple elderberries in this section [of the country]. People use them for preserves and elderberry wine. If you climb up in the mountains in the higher elevations, especially in the Smokies, there is a red elderberry with a white blossom—it's a different shaped group of flowers, like a pineapple, but smaller. The purple elderberry blossom is flat on top. They both have the white blooms, but the fruit of the purple elderberry is different."

Jake Waldroop says, "They're most everywhere. They're a small berry and they grow in a cluster. They usually ripen in August. They say elderberries make the finest wine, although I never made any. They make good jelly and preserves."

Aunt Lola Gannon's grandmother made elderberry wine. "She was a practical nurse and midwife. I believe she used it to give to people with rheumatism, lame joints. When she went to deliver a baby, she gave this wine to the patient."

Lawton Brooks told us that he does make wine out of elderberries. "You just put them up like you do all the berries. Put them in your churn or something like that. Then you let them work off [ferment]. Put a little sugar

in them and let them work off good. Then you take them up and strain that. Add a good bit of sugar to them that time, and put them back in the churn again, and let them work off again. I don't know exactly how long it took us to make that stuff. I got drunk on it—stayed drunk for a day or two. That was such a bad drunk that I've never drunk any more elderberry wine. It liked to have killed me."

Mountain people used to make fritters out of the blooms by dipping them in a thin batter and frying them in grease.

Elderberry pie: make a crust using one cup flour and one tablespoon shortening. Roll it out thin, place in a pie pan and cook the crust before you put berries in it. For the pie, use one pint elderberries, one tablespoon cornstarch, and one cup sugar. Put them in the cooked pie crust and bake thirty minutes at 325°.

Elderflower flapjacks: remove the stems from two dozen flower clusters. Wash flowers in one quart water with four teaspoons salt. Mix with a pancake batter and fry. Sprinkle the pancakes with sugar.

Elderberry drink: cook berries with sugar. Strain and serve cold.

Elderflower fritters: dip flowers in hot fat. Sprinkle with sugar and eat.

Elderberry wine: use five quarts of berries to six quarts of water. Mash the berries and let stand in a crock two weeks, stirring every day. Strain. Add as much sugar as you have juice. Let stand two weeks and then bottle.

Elderberry jam: eight cups berries; six cups sugar; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vinegar. Crush and measure the berries, then add sugar and vinegar. Boil until thick. Pour boiling into scalded jars and seal.

Elderberry-apple-orange jam: one quart elderberries; five cups sugar; one lemon; twelve large cooking apples; three medium-sized oranges. Cook apples until mushy. Add the berries, oranges, and lemon chopped fine. Grate the rinds of one orange and the lemon. Mix together with sugar and boil thirty minutes.

Steamed elderberry pudding: four cups berries; two cups sugar; one teaspoon lemon juice; one tablespoon butter; two cups flour; four teaspoons baking powder; one teaspoon salt; $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk. Sift dry ingredients and work in the butter. Add milk and mix well. Combine sugar, berries, and lemon juice and mix these with the batter; pour into a buttered baking dish, cover tightly, and steam forty-five minutes. Serve with cream.

Possum haw (*Viburnum nudum*) (family Caprifoliaceae)

Possum haw is a large shrub found in wet places—in swamps and along streams. It has oval, shiny green leaves and flat clusters of sweet-scented white flowers. Its fruits are very seedy blue berries.

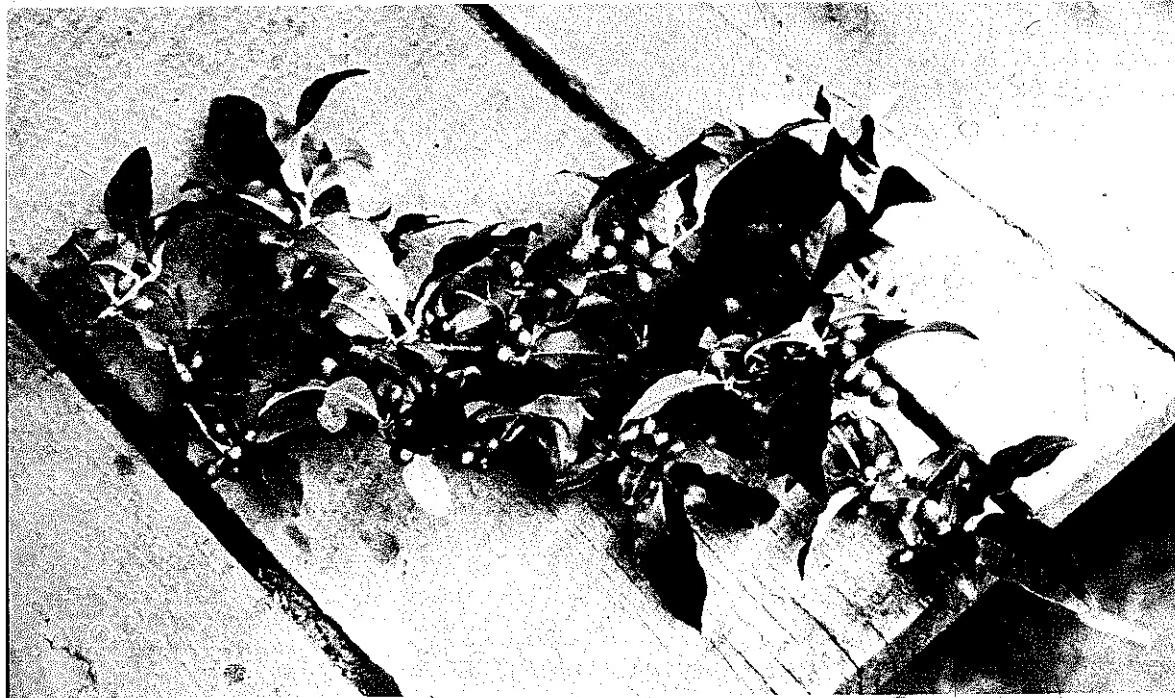


PLATE 256 Possum haw

Black haw (*Viburnum prunifolium*)

Black haw is a large shrub or small tree, which grows in open, rocky woodlands. Its leaves are ovate and finely toothed. Flowers appear in flat white cymes followed by black berries.

Both the possum haw and the black haw are extremely seedy, but can be used for jelly. They are sometimes combined with wild grapes or elderberries. Some say that the viburnum fruits are best gathered after a frost.

Possum haw jelly: boil berries, strain, add sugar to taste, and boil again until thickened. Combine with crabapples, if desired.

Black haw sauce: one quart berries; $\frac{3}{4}$ cup honey; two tablespoons lemon juice. Crush the berries, strain, and cook with honey and lemon juice for ten minutes; then chill and whip.

Figs (*Ficus carica*) (family Moraceae)

Figs persist as bushes around old houses and garden areas, freezing back every winter in the mountain areas, but sending up new shoots again in the spring. Its twigs have an acrid, milky juice that is poisonous to some people. The flowers are very insignificant, but when ripe the figs are very good to



PLATE 257. Fig

eat. The fruits have a large sugar content, and can be dried or frozen. Some say they should always be picked in the early morning. Figs have been used not only as a source of food but also in home medicine for boils, sores, or pulmonary and kidney infections.

Fig preserves: put figs in a pan, and add sugar until it covers the figs. Let them sit overnight, then cook slowly until the juice boils to a jelly. Put in jars and seal.

Preserved figs: one pint figs; $\frac{3}{4}$ pound sugar. Cover figs with water to which a pinch of baking soda has been added to take away dust and fuzz. Add the sugar, and bring to a boil slowly, and let stand overnight. Repeat the boiling and standing three times, adding spices or a lemon slice to the last boil. On the third day, pack in jars.

Fig pudding: two cups cooked rice; two cups milk; one whole egg beaten; $\frac{1}{4}$ stick butter or margarine; one cup chopped figs; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped nut meats; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar; $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ginger; $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla. Add the sugar to the beaten egg, and fold in rice, milk, figs, nuts, and spices. Add vanilla and melted butter. Pour into greased baking dish and bake in a 350° oven until mixture is set and slightly browned on top. Serve with cream, ice cream, or vanilla sauce.

Honey figs: peel figs and cut in half. Arrange in serving dish and pour a mixture of equal parts honey and hot water over them. Chill well and serve with cream.

Figs with ham: peel figs and arrange with finely sliced ham on a platter.

Ripe fig preserves: Place figs in the sun for a short while to harden their outer skin, then prick each fig with a darning needle. Prepare syrup (use one pound sugar in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water for each pound figs) by stirring water until all sugar has dissolved and bring to a boil. Add fruit and boil one minute. Add three to four tablespoons lemon juice and boil until fruit is clear and transparent. Bottle and seal while hot.

Fig preserves: six quarts firm, ripe, unbroken figs; six cups sugar; four cups water. Wash figs and pat dry. Bring sugar and water to a boil, add figs, and cook until tender. Pack in jars and process thirty minutes in a hot-water bath.

Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*) (family Berberidaceae)

(maypop, mandrake, hog apple, wild lemon)

Colonial in habit, mayapples appear in large colonies on rich bottom lands and open hillsides. The large, umbrella-like leaves hide the pretty white

PLATES 258-259 Florence Brooks with mayapple.



flowers and, later the oval fruits. The lemon-yellow fruits are edible, with a strawberry-like flavor. Green mayapples can give you a terrific stomach ache. CAUTION: ALL THE REST OF THE PLANT IS POISONOUS IF EATEN.

Jake Waldrop described the mayapple to us. "It'll have one stem come up to a bunch and have a broad leaf. Sometimes it'll fork. It has a great big white bloom that sheds off and it'll bear an apple. They're pretty good to eat. Black draft medicine is almost all pure mayapple. The plants die in the fall and come back every year." Mayapples are delicious candied, preserved as jam, and in pies.

Mayapple drink: squeeze out the juice from the fruit, and add sugar and lemon; or add to white wine.

Mayapple marmalade: gather ripe fruits, and simmer until soft. Strain through a colander, and boil the pulp with sugar to taste.

Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) (family Annonaceae)

(custard tree, custard apple, frost banana)

The pawpaw is a small slender tree, found in rich woods and along streams. It is always easily identified by its obovate green leaves, and its very ill-smelling twigs. Three-petaled dark red flowers appear before the leaves in early spring. The fruits are green, then yellow, and finally brown, and look like stubby bananas with a thick, sweet pulp. They are ripe in late autumn, and are about an inch in diameter. One has to develop a taste for pawpaws. Someone said they "feel like sweet potatoes in your mouth, and taste somewhere between a banana and a persimmon." Gordon Underwood said you "eat them just like a pear. They're yellow on the inside."

Baked pawpaws: bake in skins; serve with cream.

Pawpaw pie: one cup sugar; one cup milk; one egg; $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt; 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups pawpaws, peeled and seeded. Place in a stew pan and stir together. Cook until thickened. Pour in an unbaked pie shell and bake until done.

Pawpaw flump or float: beat up pulp with egg white and sugar like an apple float.

Pawpaw bread: add pawpaw pulp to mat bread. It gives bread a lovely rose-red color.

River plum (*Prunus americana*) (family Rosaceae)

The river plum is a small tree which grows to twenty feet. It has thorny branches and can be found along rivers and streams in the mountains and piedmont. Leaves are ovate and toothed. The sweet, white, five-petaled

flowers appear before the leaves in early spring (April–May). The very tart fruits are red or yellow and can be dried for winter use.

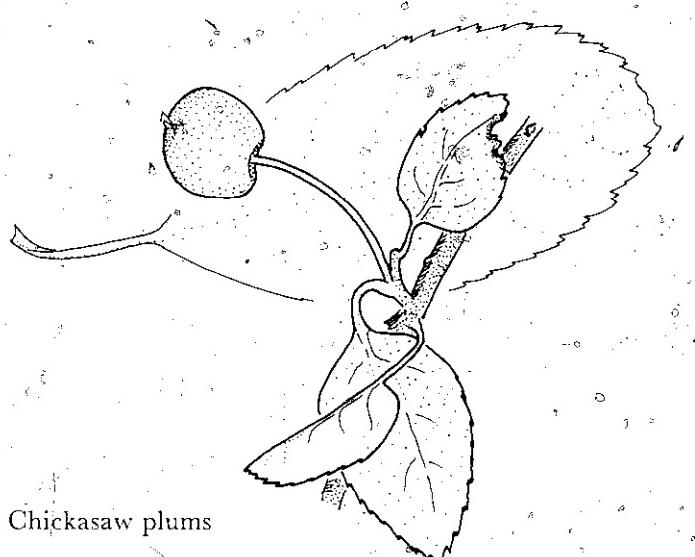
**Sloe plum (*Prunus umbellata*)
(hog plum)**

The sloe plum is a small tree found in pine woods and along roadsides, mostly in the piedmont. Its bark is scaly and the leaves are oval and shiny. Its pure white flowers appear several weeks later than those of the chickasaws or river plums. The dark-colored fruit ripens from July to September. Fruits are small and tart, sometimes rather bitter.

Chickasaw plum (*Prunus angustifolius*)

Chickasaw plums were once native to areas west of the Mississippi River. The Greeks and Cherokees planted them near their villages and they have naturalized in old fields, roadsides, and open woodlands all over the mountain areas. The chickasaw is a small tree, with narrow leaves, which usually grows in clumps. The white flowers appear before the leaves. Chickasaws have the best-tasting plums—large red-yellow fruits that are very sweet when ripe and make superlative plum jelly, plum butter, preserves, and spiced plums.

In the old days, it was the fashion to have plum-gathering picnics, going by horse and buggy or wagon to the plum thickets to gather bushels of fruit and dry them for winter use.



PLATES 260–261 Chickasaw plums



PLATE 261

Wild plum catsup: five quarts wild plums; four pounds sugar; one pint vinegar; one pint water; $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons cinnamon; one tablespoon allspice; one tablespoon cloves. Boil plums with one teaspoon soda. Bring to a rolling boil, then strain through a colander. Simmer with sugar, vinegar, and spices until thick as catsup.

Plum cobbler: cook and pit one quart plums. Roll biscuit dough thin and cut in strips. Grease a pan well and add a layer of plums and strips of dough, topping with sugar and dabs of butter. Repeat until pan is almost full. Bake in medium oven.

Plum pudding: put pitted, cooked, sweetened plums two inches deep in bottom of a baking dish. Beat one cup sugar, four tablespoons butter, and one egg to a cream. Add one scant cup of milk, two cups all-purpose flour, and two teaspoons baking powder. Mix well, and pour over plums. Bake one hour at 350° .

Wild plum conserve: seven pounds wild plums; five pounds sugar; two pounds of seeded raisins; three oranges. Wash and pick over plums. Cover with boiling water, and add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon soda. Bring to rolling boil. Pour off the soda water, rinse plums, and strain through a colander. Slice oranges in thin slices, rind and all, removing seeds, and grind the raisins. Combine fruit and sugar, adding enough water to keep them from sticking. Simmer until thick and clear.

Wild plum jam: Three-fourths pound sugar for each pound plums. Place in alternate layers in kettle and let stand until juice flows freely. Boil 15 minutes. Press through a sieve, return to fire, and boil until thick, stirring constantly.

Wild plum preserves: take half-ripe plums, and boil for three minutes. Pour off the water and add one pound of sugar to one pound of fruit. Boil for thirty minutes, or until the syrup is thick.

Plum preserves: pour boiling water over large plums, then remove the skins. Make a syrup of a pound sugar and a cup of water for each pound fruit. Boil, and pour over the plums. Let it stand overnight, then drain saving the syrup. Boil syrup again, skim, and pour over plums. Let them stand in this another day, then cook in the syrup until clear. Remove the plums with a skimmer and pack them carefully in cans; boil the syrup until thick and pour into the cans and seal.

Plum jelly: cover $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon half-ripe plums with water in a porcelain kettle, and boil ten minutes. Pour off the juice and strain through flannel. Add one pound sugar to each pint juice and boil until it will harden when cold (about twenty to thirty minutes).

Plum sauce: gather plums, wash, and lift gently from water. Add one cup sugar for each cup fruit. Do not add extra water as that clinging to fruit is enough. Cook slowly at low heat. When mixture has thickened, strain through colander to remove seeds and skins.

OR: take $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon almost green plums, wash and cover with water, and boil fifteen minutes. Pour off the water; add to the plums two pounds sugar and one cup good apple vinegar. Boil for thirty minutes. Take from the fire and flavor with one teaspoonful each of extract of cloves and ginger.

OR: boil three quarts of half-ripe plums fifteen minutes. Rub through a colander and add one pound sugar, one cup apple vinegar, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon each of ground cloves, mace, and cinnamon. Place again on the fire and boil for half an hour.

Plum sweet pickle: take $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon almost green plums and scald until the skins are tender. Drain them well and place in jars. Have ready a syrup made of two pounds sugar, one pint apple vinegar, and a teaspoon each whole cloves and mace. Pour over the plums while hot, and seal.

Salt wild plum pickle: take $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon large green plums, wash and put in self-sealing jars. Make a pickle of one quart water, one teaspoon vinegar, and one teaspoon salt. Boil a few minutes, pour over the plums, and seal while hot. Keep until the cool weather and they will be ready for use.

Sour wild plum pickle: take $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon green plums, and pierce them each two or three times with a needle. Put in jars. Boil one quart vinegar, two cups sugar, one teaspoon cloves, and one stick cinnamon. Pour over the plums and seal while hot.

Green wild plum pickle (imitation olives): pick plums that are grown, but not at all ripe. Boil a mixture of one tablespoon white mustard seed, one tablespoon salt, and one pint vinegar. Pour this over the plums. Repeat this three mornings in succession and seal in jars.

Spiced wild plums: boil $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon plums five minutes, pour off the water and add three pounds sugar, one teaspoon each ground cloves, allspice, and cinnamon, and one pint vinegar. Boil a half hour, stirring constantly. Seal while hot.

Peach (*Prunus persica*) (*P. amygdalus*)

(Indian peach)

Indian peaches are small trees, spreading with scraggly branches, said to be descendants of those trees planted by the Cherokees around their villages. Other, more modern varieties are planted by the birds, or persist around old homesites. Leaves are very narrow and shining, and beautiful pink blossoms appear before the leaves in very early spring. The fruit of the Indian peach is white with a rosy cheek, white-meated with a red heart. Other old peach trees have small, yellowish or pinkish fruits. All have a most delicious flavor, raw or cooked. Peaches are rich in iron, and peach leaf tea was a medicine for bladder troubles or used as a sedative.

Peach and apple butters were made with molasses before the early settlers had sugar.



PLATE 262 Terry and Teresa Tyler with Indian peach.

Pickled peaches: peel fruit, quarter, and put in a pot. Make enough brine of two parts vinegar, one part water, and two parts sugar to cover fruit. Add ground cinnamon; nutmeg, and allspice to taste. Cook until tender. When done, lift the fruit out and pack in jars. Keep brine simmering and pour into jars over fruit leaving a half inch at the top. Seal at once. (Apples can be used instead of peaches.)

Peach tarts: for the tart pastry use two cups flour; one teaspoon salt; two teaspoons sugar; two egg yolks; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sweetened soft butter; a few drops of water. Sift dry ingredients together. Place in bowl and make a hollow in center. Put egg yolks and butter in hollow and work in with the fingers, gradually blending in dry ingredients. Add a few drops of water to hold the mixture together. Wrap in wax paper and chill thoroughly. Roll out $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick and fit loosely into an eight-inch pan. Bake, cool, and brush with glaze. Peel and slice the peaches, roll in lemon juice, drain, arrange in shell, and spoon on glaze, covering all pieces well. Chill. For glaze use $\frac{3}{4}$ cup orange juice; two tablespoons sugar; one tablespoon cornstarch. Mix in saucepan and cook, stirring until thick and clear. (Blackberries or grapes may be used instead of peaches.)

Pincherry (*Prunus pensylvanica*) (family Rosaceae)
(red bird cherry)

The pincherry is a small tree found in the high mountains with a shining, lenticled bark, and slender, almost drooping branches. The leaves are very narrow, thin, and a shining green. Solitary five-petaled white flowers appear before the leaves in the spring. Cherries are small, sour, and a bright red in color. They make a particularly pretty, bright red jelly.

Wild cherry (*Prunus serotina*)
(black cherry, rum cherry)

The black cherry can be a tall tree (100 feet high in the mountain coves), or it can be smaller and almost shrubby on rock outcrops, along fencerows, or in old pastures. It grows in all habitats, and is a common tree in the mountains. The bark is satiny, the leaves are oval and shiny green. Flowers appear in a white raceme with the new leaves and the cherries are black on red stems.

The wild cherry has always been a "medicine" tree. Its bark was used in cough medicines and known as "lung balm" bark. To prepare wild cherry bark for tea, boil the cherry bark and make a cough syrup out of it. Take the bark and a little whiskey. They claim it's the best medicine there is for the stomach.

Jake Waldroop says, "The wild cherries are ripe about the last of September and the first of October. They're ripe when they drop off the trees. They're mostly a hull and a great big round seed. They've got a pretty good flavor, not too bitter. They're pretty plentiful."



PLATE 263 Wild cherry

Cherry wine: crush the cherries, put them in a large crock and cover with boiling water. Cover the crock and let it sit until the juice stops working. Then strain through a cloth squeezing out all the juice. Put the juice back in the crock, add three cups sugar to each gallon, cover, and let sit nine to ten days, or until it stops working. Put in bottles, but don't seal too tightly until it has stopped fermenting completely. The wine is supposed to be very potent.

Wild cherry jelly: wash three quarts cherries, and place in a vessel with two cups water. Boil until very tender. Pour off the juice, measure and add one measure sugar to each measure juice. Boil until jellied. Put in molds and cover when cold with writing paper dipped in brandy.

Wild brandy cherries: fill a large jar with cherries. Make a syrup of a half pound of sugar for each pound of fruit. Scald the fruit in this syrup, but do not boil. Remove the fruit; boil the syrup until it is reduced by one third, and add one third as much brandy. Pour over the cherries, and seal while hot.

Southern negus: take a quart red cherries, three pounds black wild cherries, and four pounds currants. Mash and mix all together, and store in a cool place for three or four days. Strain, and boil the juice. To every pint of juice, add $\frac{1}{2}$ pound sugar. Let cool and bottle. Add two or three tablespoonfuls to one glass ice water.

One-flowered haw (*Crataegus uniflora*) (family Rosaceae)
(haws, thornapples)

This is a small shrub found in open oak-pine woods and on rock outcrops. Its leaves are leathery and toothed. White blossoms appear in the spring with the new leaves. The haws are brownish-red, globose, and very seedy.

October haw (*Crataegus flava*)

This is the most common haw in this area, a shrub or small tree with rounded, serrate-edged leaves. The white flowers appear rather late in the spring, followed by reddish-yellow haws late in August-September. This haw is common in open, dry, or rocky woodlands.

River haw (*Crataegus punctata*)

River haw forms a very thorny shrub or small tree, found along stream banks and rich, rocky woods. The leaves are almost obovate, and its white flowers, purple-centered, are followed by bright red fruits.



PLATE 264 October haw

PLATE 265 River haw



Mrs. Norton described the haws as "haw berries. They're very seedy, and they are usually eaten plain. We used to call them rabbit apples; they grow on thorny bushes, and are just little, round, red things. I've eaten some of them. I prefer them to groundcherries any time."

Thornapple relish: pick over and wash one gallon thornapples. Remove blossom ends and cut the apples in half. Put in a kettle with barely enough water to cover the fruit, and simmer until soft. Drain, and strain through a colander. Add one cup brown sugar, two teaspoons pepper, two teaspoons salt, two teaspoons cinnamon, and three finely chopped onions. Mix together. Add one pint vinegar, and boil until onions are tender. Bottle.

Hawthorn jelly: $\frac{1}{2}$ pint water, one pound fruit. Simmer haws, mash, and add one pound sugar to one pint liquid plus a dash of lemon juice. The result will be a brown jelly that tastes like guava.

Red haw (hawthorn): crush three pounds fruit (not too ripe). Add four cups water and bring to a boil. Simmer ten minutes and strain the juice through a jelly bag. Bring four cups of juice to a boil and add seven cups sugar. This shows a jelly test soon after it begins to boil (for test, jelly flakes rather than pours off a spoon). Pour in jars and seal.

Haw marmalade: cook haws in very little water, and press through a sieve. Use $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups strained pulp and juice. The juice of a lemon or orange improves the flavor. Add five cups sugar, boil hard for one minute, and seal in jars.

Pear (*Pyrus communis*)

Old pear trees are found at homesites, and sometimes naturalize at the edges of open woods. They are tall trees, often with scraggly branches. They have fragrant white flowers very early in the spring. The pears are of varying size and flavor, often very hard, and need cooking to be edible. Pears can be substituted in any recipes using apples or dried for winter use.

Baked pears: put halves in baking dish, cover with honey and a dash of cinnamon. Or, scoop out the cores (but leave the peeling) and fill the center with honey and chopped nuts. Bake half hour at low heat.

Pear conserve: one cup pears and one cup apples. Grind fruit, add two cups sugar, and mix thoroughly. Boil for twenty minutes and seal.

Apple (*Pyrus malus*) (family Rosaceae)

Old apples persist where orchards once covered the mountains, and around old homesites. Apples also come up along fencerows and woods' edges where apple cores have been thrown. These old apple trees may be

gnarled and crooked; but often have small apples with a very good taste. The sweet white apple blossoms appear with the leaves in early spring.

Dried apples: apples are either sliced into thin slivers, or cored and sliced into rings. The rings were strung on a pole; slices were spread out on boards. They were then set out in the sun or in front of the fireplace, depending on the weather, until the slices were brown and rubbery. This usually took two or three days, and they were turned over frequently so they would dry evenly. When dry, the apples were stored in sacks for use during the winter. Mrs. Grover Bradley says, "Those make the best fried pies I ever ate." (Peaches were dried just like apples. Small berries such as blackberries were simply spread out on boards and were not sliced.)

Apple beer: peel apples and dry peelings as above. Put peelings in a crock, and add enough boiling water to cover. Cover crock and let sit for about two days until the flavor comes out in the peelings. Strain and drink. Add some sugar, if desired.

Scalloped apples: use six tart cooking apples, one cup graham cracker crumbs, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar, $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon cinnamon, butter or margarine, water. Pare, core, and slice apples. Roll out crackers and add sugar and cinnamon mixture. Place in baking dish in layers, covering each layer with crumbs dotted with butter. Add hot water to moisten. Bake in a medium oven three quarters of an hour until apples are well cooked and crumbs browned.

Dried apple cake: mix your favorite white or yellow cake, and bake in four thin layers. Mix one pint dried apples with one pint water and cook until thick and the apples are mashed up. Sweeten apples to taste and add spices. Let cool and spread between layers and on top of the cake.

Fruit vinegar: Mrs. Tom MacDowell said that she used to make fruit vinegar. "We had a cider mill and we ground the apples up and made it out of the cider. Before the cider mill ever come, they mashed up the apples and put them in a barrel and let'em rot, and then drained the vinegar off."

Apple vinegar: mash up two or three bushels of apples. Put them in a barrel or crock and fill with water, using one quart syrup to $2\frac{1}{2}$ gallons water. Cover with a coarse cloth and keep in a warm place. The vinegar will make in a few months, but will not be good for pickles until it is eighteen months to two years old. Vinegar may also be made from one gallon cider using one cup syrup and "mother" from other vinegar.

Baked apples: wash, core, and fill with honey and chopped nuts. Bake at low heat.

Apples on a stick: alternate chunks of apples and pears on a stick. Broil over an open fire.

Cider apples: peel and cut apples in small pieces. Cook slowly on low heat in enough cider to cover the apples.

Apple sauce: cook peeled, cored apple slices with butter and brown sugar.

Apple grunter: use little, sour wild apples. Grease a baking dish with butter, put in two inches sliced apples, and shake on cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Tuck six $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch cubes fat salt pork into the apples. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup molasses over the whole thing. Put on a biscuit dough crust. Make holes in the crust with fork tines so the juice can bubble up. Bake.

Crabapple (*Pyrus coronaria*) (family Rosaceae)
(northern wild crab)

The northern wild crabapple is a wide-spreading tree of the mountains, found in thickets, rich coves, and often along streams. It has oval leaves and rather spiky twigs. The beautiful pink flowers appear in early May and spread a spicy fragrance over the woods. The fruits are round, yellow-green, and very hard. They are considered the best of all apples for apple butter.

Crabapple (*Pyrus angustifolius*)

The southern crabapple is a small, spreading tree, usually growing in thickets, with prickly branches and very narrow, toothed leaves. The flowers are deep pink and very fragrant. The little apples are hard, shiny, and green, and will hang on the tree until January. Jake Waldrop says, "We used them mixed with other apples for jelly. The crabapples are ready now (in September). They never do get sweet. Nothing affects them—they're always sour."



PLATE 266 Crabapple

Crabapple jelly: one gallon crabapples and one gallon golden delicious apples. Peel apples and quarter. Cook together for thirty minutes. Strain the juice. Put into a cooker, with two cups sugar for each cup juice. Boil for one hour.

Crabapple jelly: simmer crabapples twenty minutes. Mash in a pan. Strain, and for each pint juice add one pound sugar; boil ten minutes. Add mint leaves if desired. Put in jars, and set in a dark place to thicken.

Virginia jelly: four quarts crabapples, two quarts grapes. Wash and clean fruit, cook and strain juice. Add sugar and boil until it reaches the jelly stage.

Crabapple preserves: small hard crabapples are picked from the ground in December or January. Cook with sugar and a few red cinnamon candies. Juice thickens into jelly overnight.

Sweet pickled crabapples: two quarts crabapples, $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar, two sticks cinnamon, two teaspoons whole allspice, one teaspoon whole cloves, two cups vinegar, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups water. Wash crabapples. Cut out blossom ends, but leave stems intact. Tie spices in cheesecloth. Combine in large pot with spices, sugar, vinegar, and water. Boil five minutes. Add enough fruit to cover the surface without crowding. Cook slowly until just tender. Fill jars, and seal at once.

Crabapple butter: four quarts crabapples, three cups sugar, four cups water, two teaspoons cinnamon, one teaspoon cloves, one teaspoon salt. Cook crabapples with peelings and run through a food mill. Boil slowly over low flame until thick. Seal boiling hot.

Crabapple preserves: peel the crabapples and drop them in water. When all are ready, place them in a porcelain kettle and let them just come to a boil. Remove from the fire, pour them with the water into an earthen bowl and let them stand twenty-four hours. Then take them out of the water and remove the cores. Drain them and then pack in sugar, using one pound sugar for each pound fruit. Let them stand twelve hours; pour off the syrup and boil it twenty minutes; then put the apples in and let them boil until clear, when they will be ready to seal.

Crabapple jelly: remove the stems, wash the apples and rub them well with a coarse cloth. Put them in a porcelain kettle, cover with water and let them boil until very tender. Strain out the juice and return it to the fire and boil ten or fifteen minutes longer. Then add one pound of sugar to each pint of juice, and boil until it jellies. This will take only a few minutes.

Crabapple pickle: peel and core the apples. Put them in a jar and over them pour hot vinegar, sweetened and spiced; as for peach pickles. Let this remain twenty-four hours; then drain off the vinegar, heat it, and pour over the apples and seal.

Crabapple pickle: peel and core the apples. Put them in a jar and over

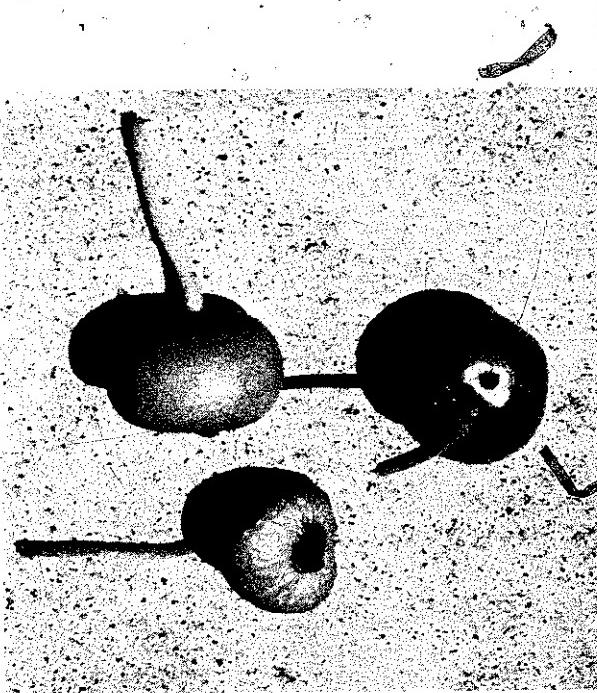
them pour hot vinegar, sweetened and spiced with choice spices. Always use good apple vinegar not less than two years old. Always seal the jars with three layers of brown paper put on with a flour paste when it is not convenient to use jars that are self-sealing.

Pasture rose (*Rosa caroliniana*) (family Rosaceae)

The pasture rose is a familiar low bush which grows to six feet high, found in old fields, on rock outcrops, and on roadsides. It has variable divided leaves and prickly stems. The roses are single, pink, and very fragrant. The red hips are extremely rich in vitamin C.

Swamp rose (*Rosa palustris*)

The taller swamp rose is found in marshes, bogs, and along rivers and



PLATES 267-268 Rose hips

streams. The flowers are small but fragrant, and the red hips are equally edible. The hips of various cultivated roses such as the dog rose (*Rosa canina*), the sweet brier (*Rosa eglanteria*), and the multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) can all be eaten.

Rose hip tea: cook the hips and strain off the juice. Then reheat juice with honey or sugar. It has the taste of apple. The darker the hips, the better the tea.

Rose hip juice: wash and remove ends from hips. Use $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups water to one cup rose hips. Cover, and let stand twenty-four hours. Strain, and bring to a rolling boil. Add two tablespoons of vinegar or lemon juice and bottle.

Rose hip jelly: put in a boiler with water according to how many rose hips you have. Just let them simmer. Strain. Let juice start simmering and add a cup sugar for each cup juice.

Rose hip soup: four ounces dried rose hips, three cloves, cinnamon stick, lemon rind, one tablespoon white wine, one ounce flour, one ounce fat. Soak rose hips, and boil in one pint water with the lemon rind, cinnamon, and cloves until they are soft. Rub through a fine sieve. Brown flour in fat and gradually add the soup. Sweeten to taste. Add the wine and serve hot.

Haggenbutten: simmer rose hips gently. Strain the juice, and add honey. (Haws can be substituted.)

Rose hip jam: cook one pound of fresh rose hips with two cups boiling water. Press. Add pectin and sugar to juice and boil.

Rose hip jelly: boil equal parts of sugar and rose hips in enough water to keep from scorching. As soon as hips are soft enough, mash them in this brew, and boil five minutes longer. Strain, add pectin to juice and boil again.

Rose hip juice: four cups rose hips, two cups boiling water. Wash hips, chop coarsely, add boiling water. Cook five minutes. Strain. Add sugar to taste. Drink hot or cold, use on puddings, or add to cold milk to make a pudding by thickening rose juice with ground rice or tapioca. Makes a good drink with a dash of cinnamon or ginger.

Rose soup: cook hips. Strain, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar and one tablespoon cornstarch. Cook until slightly thickened. Serve hot or cold.

Rose petal jam: one pound rose petals; two cups sugar; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water. Pinch white part from petals, wash, and dry. Dissolve sugar, stir in the petals, and place in a shallow pan. Cover with glass and place in the sun for eight hours. Then put in a kettle and simmer for twenty minutes.

Rose sugar: bury a fragrant rose in a glass jar full of powdered sugar. Put the top on tightly and place in the sun for several days. Use sugar in tea or on fruit.

Fried rose petals: dip in whiskey, then in batter. Fry in deep fat, dip in sugar, and serve.

Rose dew: gather roses in early morning. Pull petals into small pieces and to each cupful add two cups sugar. Mix well and pack in jars. After two months, drain off the liquid that has formed and bottle it for use in flavored drinks, whipped cream, or puddings.

Rose syrup: four cups rose hips, two cups boiling water. Cook five minutes, and strain through a cloth. Add sugar and boil until it begins to thicken slightly.

Rose petal tea: four cups boiling water over three teaspoons dried rose petals. Steep three to five minutes, and sweeten with honey. Add mint or basswood blooms for dyspepsia.

Maypop (*Passiflora incarnata*) (family Passifloraceae)

(wild passion flower, apricot vine, granadilla)

The maypop climbs ten to twelve feet by means of tendrils, but usually is found looped over other foliage. Leaves are three-lobed and indented. The showy lavender and green flowers are followed by the pulpy yellow-green fruit, juicy and edible when fully ripe.

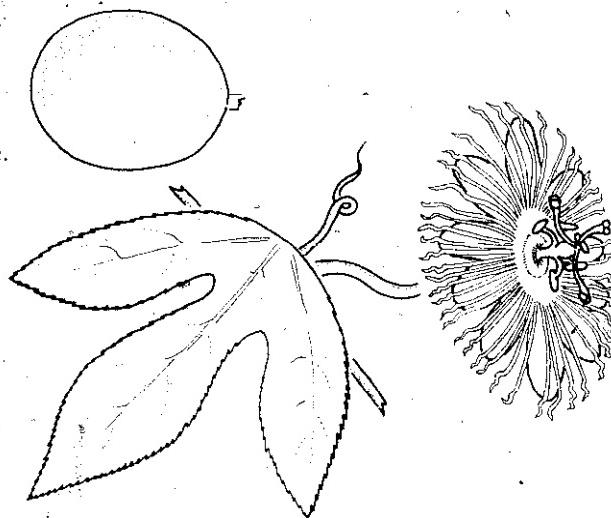
Rev. Rufus Morgan told us, "The passion flower is supposed to have in the flower the various symbols of the crucified Christ—the nails and such, I've forgotten just what the symbols are. It is a fruit children like."

Fanny Lamb said, "Just after frost, they go to turning yellow. Wild apricots are very different from the tame ones. They are about the size of an egg and are very seedy inside."



PLATES 269-270 Maypops in flower

PLATE 271 . . . and mature.



Yellow passion flower (*Passiflora lutea*)

This small flowered relative to the maypop is a higher climber. It has small, deep green, blunt, three-lobed leaves that may be variegated, or streaked with white or yellow. The flowers are small and pale yellow. The purple fruits are about one inch long.

Maypop drink: pour hot water over maypops, squash out the pulp, strain, drink hot.

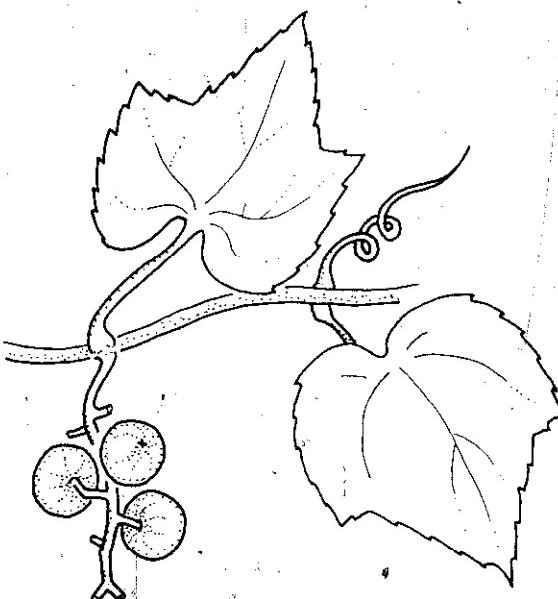
Maypops (wild apricots): gather maypops when they are very green. Take off the peeling, cut in halves, and take out the seed. Drop them in lime water, made in the proportion of one cup lime to one gallon water. Let them stand twelve hours. Boil fifteen minutes in weak alum water; then boil in clear water until they are clear. Drain well. Pack in granulated sugar using $\frac{3}{4}$ pound sugar to each pound fruit. Let stand twelve hours, then boil twenty minutes. Flavor strongly with ginger root. Either seal in jars or dry as crystallized apricots.

Maypop jelly: Use the seed and pulp of ripe maypops. Boil them fifteen minutes and strain. Add one pint sugar to each pint of juice and boil twenty-five to thirty minutes, or until it jells. To make maypop syrup, boil only until a thin syrup tests. It's good with biscuits or pancakes.

Fox grape (*Vitis labrusca*) (family Vitaceae)

The fox grape is a high-climbing vine, with very large, rather smooth leaves. It is found in low woods and along streams in the mountains and upper piedmont. Flowers are intensely sweet scented and grapes are small and rather sweet.

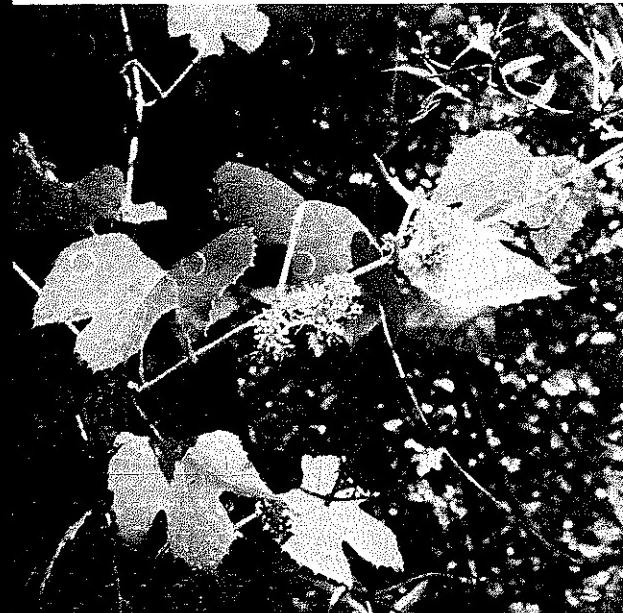
PLATE 272 Fox grape

**Chicken grape (*Vitis vulpina*)**

(possum grape, river grape, winter grape, frost grape, bull grape)

This grape is high climbing by means of dark red tendrils. Its bark shreds with age. The young leaves are pinkish in the spring, and toothed and three-lobed when mature. The flowers have the odor of mignonette. Grapes are small, black, or very dark blue, with a musky odor. They ripen after frost. The high-climbing possum grape (*V. baileyana*) of the mountains is a variety of the *Vitis vulpina*.

PLATE 273 Possum grape



Summer grape (*Vitis aestivalis*)
(pigeon grape, bunch grape)

The summer grape is found along streams, usually loosely draped over bushes and small trails. It has large dentate leaves, white on the underside. Its leaves may be cobwebby when mature. The grapes ripen in September, and are blue-purple with a bloom. They may remain on the tree until they become wrinkled and raisin-like.

Muscadine (*Vitis rotundifolia*) (family Vitaceae)
(scuppernong, bullace)

The muscadine is our most common grapevine, climbing everywhere. It can go to one hundred feet in the trees, in all habitats. Its bark is white-speckled, and the leaves are small and glossy on both sides. Small green flowers are followed by large, thick-skinned, richly flavored grapes. Grapes on individual vines may vary greatly in texture, color, or flavor. Grapes are rich in vitamins B and C, and iron. They are said to stimulate the appetite. The wild muscadine is the ancestor of many cultivated varieties.

There is a tremendous variety of wild grapes in the mountains: possum, river, summer, fall, muscadine, scuppernong, and fox. They are usually eaten plain, or made into jelly, juice, or wine. The leaves can be used in making cucumber pickles. Place them between the layers of cucumbers in a crock, but do not eat them. They add a nice flavor and help pickle the cucumbers.

Jake Waldroop told us about fox grapes. "The Japanese beetles just killed ours out. There were a big grape. They looked like a concord, only bigger. When they go to getting ripe, they have the best smell. You can make wine, jelly, preserves. The fox grapes were something wonderful—plenty of them. They ripen in the later part of August on into September. There is also a fall grape. One vine will be in several trees, and have just bushels of grapes from this one vine. They are sweet. They can be eaten skin and all."

Cora Ledbetter told us, "If you cooked grapes down and used no sugar at all, what you'd get would be juice but it'd be so sour you couldn't drink it. Wild grapes made better jellies than domestic. Cook down, strain (to get seeds out) and use about two cups sugar to one cup juice. Cook till it jellies. It doesn't take long. There's plenty of pectin in the grapes. Seal with paraffin or put in glass jars. Not too much jelly was made back then. It depended on molasses and honey for sweetening."

Dried grapes: grapes can be sun-dried for future use.

Possum grapes preserved: wash, put in jars, cover with syrup.

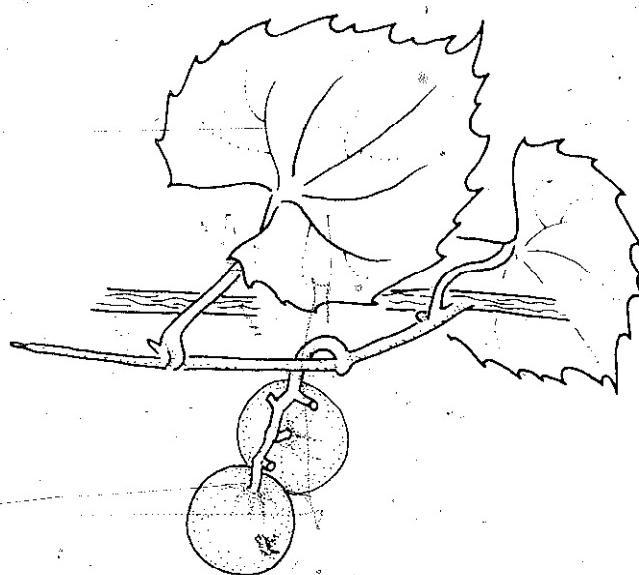


PLATE 274 Muscadine

Grape jelly: pick about a gallon of wild grapes, and wash, removing the stems. Crush in a large pan, add a pint of apple vinegar, and some cinnamon if you wish. Cook for about fifteen minutes slowly, strain through a cheesecloth, and boil for about twenty minutes. Add three pounds of sugar and cook until it starts to jell. Put into jars.

Fox grape jelly: Wash and stem one peck grapes, drain and mash. Cook, strain. Measure five cups juice and cook twenty minutes. Remove from fire and add five cups sugar, stir until all is dissolved. Pour in glasses and let stand. It will gradually thicken and will have a good grape flavor.

Grape leaves: grape leaves can be put up in June for future use. Alternate a layer of leaves with a layer of salt until you fill a jar. Soak overnight before using.

Stuffed grape leaves: wash leaves, roll, stuff with rice and chopped chicken or ham, salt, and pepper. Broil lightly.

Rolled grape leaves: gather large leaves in June, snap off petioles. For filling, use one pound minced lamb or beef with a little suet, one cup rice, salt and pepper to taste. Place tablespoon of filling in each leaf, roll, fold, stack in pot. Add cold water to $\frac{2}{3}$ depth. Boil gently one hour. It is wise to put a pie plate under the leaves to prevent burning.

Grape juice: Sterilize quart jars. Place two cups washed grapes, fully ripe, in each jar. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar. Fill to top with boiling water and seal. Let stand three to four weeks before straining for use. This makes a good-smelling, pale juice.

OR: pick and wash grapes, put in a kettle, barely cover with water, and cook. Strain, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar to each quart of juice, boil five minutes. Pour into jars and seal at once.

Possom grape juice: Gather, shell from stems, and wash. Stew the grapes and mash them. Strain. Add a little cornmeal for thickening, and boil again.

Spiced grapes: for this relish (used with meat, bread, etc.) use seven pounds fox or possum grapes, one cup fruit vinegar, two teaspoons cinnamon, five pounds sugar, one teaspoon cloves, one teaspoon allspice. Wash, stem, and pulp grapes. Put pulp with seeds over fire and cook until seeds come free. Add skins and pulp together with sugar, vinegar, and spices. Cook until thick, and can.

Crock grapes: collect dry, sound fox grapes, and pack them in a churn. Pour boiling hot fresh molasses or syrup over them. Take two clean cloths and dip the first in hot beeswax and the second in hot tallow and tie each cloth separately around the top of the churn. Make this in the fall when the grapes are fresh and ripe, and set the churn in a cool place until winter. They can be eaten during the winter after they have mildly fermented.

Scuppernong preserves: cook grapes until seeds are free, and strain. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar to one cup juice, and cook until it jells. Pack in hot jars and seal. For spiced preserves, add cinnamon, mace, and one cup vinegar.

Scuppernong juice: wash grapes, crush, and barely cover with water. Heat until pulp is soft. Remove from heat, and let sit five minutes to deepen color. Pour in a jelly bag, and squeeze. Add one cup sugar to each cup strained juice, and stir until sugar is dissolved. Heat to 180° , stirring constantly. Bottle, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch head space.

Scuppernong pie: one cup scuppernongs, seeded; one cup sugar; one tablespoon flour; one tablespoon butter; one egg, beaten; few grains salt. Heat grapes, add salt. Cream butter, sugar, flour and egg. Pour over grapes, and then pour all that into uncooked pie shell. Lattice top with pastry. Bake one hour at 300° .

Grape wine: use five gallons crushed grapes and five pounds sugar. Mix grapes and sugar together, and let work nine days. Strain, and let work nine more days. Then strain again and seal loosely in jars. The wine might work a little more, and if the tops are too tight, they may blow up. When it has quit working completely, seal jars tightly and store in a dark place.

Muscadine marmalade: Aunt Lola Cannon told us that this is "the finest thing in the way of preserved fruits. You cook the muscadines until all the pulp looks like a mass of mush. Then you put it through a colander. The product is real thick. Put sugar in and cook it down like a preserve. You have to cook the marmalade a long time, unless you add pectin or Sure-jel."

Muscadine jelly: take the pulp and juice of half-ripe muscadines. Nearly cover them with water. Boil a few minutes and strain through a jelly bag. Measure the juice, and add one pound white sugar to each pint juice. Boil until it will congeal when dropped on a cold, dry surface. This usually takes from twenty to thirty minutes.

To preserve muscadine pulps: take half-ripe muscadines between the thumb and forefinger and press the pulp into an earthen vessel; continue until the desired amount of pulp is ready. Then press the seeds from the pulp in the same way. When the seeds have all been removed, put the pulp in a kettle with just enough water to cover, and boil two or three minutes. Add $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds sugar to each pint pulp and boil twenty minutes, or until the syrup is thick.

To make a firm jelly that is nice to serve with whipped cream, put the pulps in their strained juice and add a pound sugar for each pint juice and boil for fifteen or twenty minutes.

Preserved hulls of muscadine: take the hulls, after using the pulp, and boil them in enough water to cover, until they are tender. Pour off half the water and add $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds sugar to each pint hulls. Boil until the syrup is quite thick, and put in jars.

OR: use the hulls in the same way, with one pound sugar to each pint hulls and leave all the water in which they are boiled. Seal while hot. Some people prefer these to those having more sugar.

Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*) (family *Ebenaceae*)

The persimmon is a common southern tree, found at the edges of woods, in old fields, and along roadsides. It grows to fifty feet, with a very rough trunk, and oval, leathery-looking leaves. Small leathery, greenish bell flowers attract honeybees. The fruits are one to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, orange or peach colored, with several flat seeds. They are very sour and astringent.

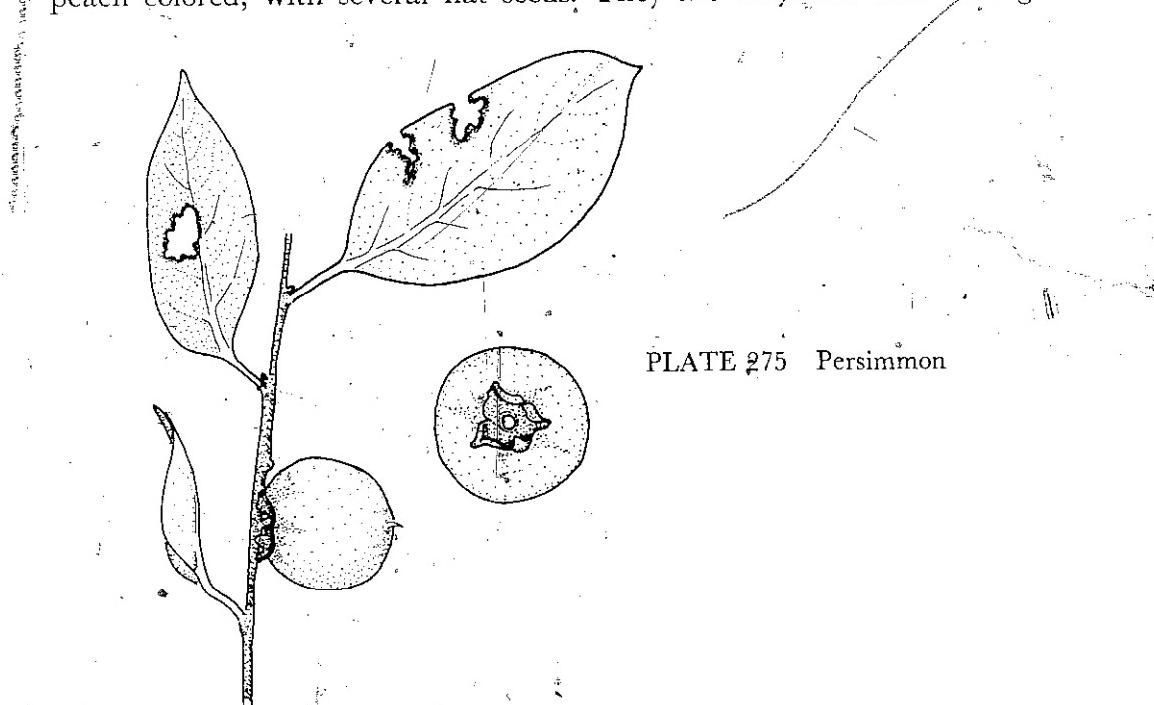


PLATE 275 Persimmon

until they are fully ripe, when they become sweet and edible. They do not need frost to ripen, but many people prefer not to pick them until after the frost. Individual persimmon trees may vary greatly as to the size and flavor of their fruits. Tree-ripened persimmons are best. To be good, a raw persimmon must be soft and squishy to the touch. Persimmons are very high in food energy. The leaves, rich in vitamin C, can be used for tea. Persimmons can be eaten plain, put into bread, or made into jam or beer.

Persimmon bread: use one cup cornmeal, one cup flour, one cup crushed persimmons with seeds removed, one spoonful of baking soda, a dash salt, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup buttermilk. Mix everything together. Add water if mixture is not thin enough. Bake like cornbread.

Persimmon beer: gather persimmons and a good number of honey locust seed pods. Wash them both well and place them in a large crock in layers until the crock is full. Pour enough boiling water in to cover them, cover the churn, and let it sit at least a week. Pour off or dip out the beer as desired. When drained, the churn may be filled with boiling water again to make a second batch.

OR: gather and wash persimmons and place them in a churn. Pour enough boiling water in to cover them and let them work. Skim off the foam, add sugar to taste, and let them work some more. The beer is supposed to be very potent.

Locust and persimmon beer: break honey locust pods into small pieces. Place in bottom of barrel or churn. Add layer of crushed persimmons, then another layer of locusts, and another of persimmons. Cover with water and let stand until fermentation stops. Drain off and bottle or use from churn. (Sometimes a layer of syrup-cane pumice was added in the bottom and on top of the persimmons and locust to add more sweetening and a mellow taste to the beer.)

Persimmon pudding: $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups persimmon pulp; $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt; $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups buttermilk; $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups flour. Strain persimmons through a colander. Stir all ingredients and put in greased pan. Bake one hour at low heat.

OR: two cups ripe persimmon pulp; one cup brown sugar; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white sugar; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cloves; one teaspoon cinnamon; dash of nutmeg; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt; two cups flour; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon soda; four tablespoons melted butter; two egg yolks; two egg whites, stiffly beaten; three cups sweet milk. Remove stems, cover with warm water. Leave persimmons in water until they are soft, then drain water and discard. Put persimmons through a colander to separate pulp from the seeds. Add sugar and spices to the pulp. Mix thoroughly. Add the two beaten egg yolks. Blend dry ingredients and milk alternately. If lumpy, beat with rotary egg beater, as batter should be very thin and smooth. Add butter and fold in egg whites. Pour in buttered

baking dish until $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Bake at 325° until firm (about one hour). Serve plain or with whipped cream and broken pecan nuts.

Persimmon frosting: cut and mash one cup persimmons. Add $\frac{1}{3}$ cup butter, and cream together. Then add three cups powdered sugar and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon vanilla. Beat until creamy.

Persimmon pie: one cup persimmon pulp; two cups sugar; one cup milk; one tablespoon flour (or cornstarch); three eggs; one teaspoon nutmeg; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt. Peel and crush persimmons until smooth. Add sugar and beat. Add three egg yolks and one egg white. Add milk, nutmeg, and salt. Beat until smooth. Pour into nine-inch pie shell and bake until done. Make meringue by beating whites of eggs until stiff. Add four tablespoons sugar. Put on top of pie and brown in moderate oven.

Candied persimmons: pack persimmons in jars, alternating with layers of sugar. Put on lids and store in a cool place until they become candied.

Stuffed persimmons: wash and stone firm persimmons. Stuff with nut meats. Roll in granulated sugar. Serve at once.

Persimmon pulp (to top pudding or ice cream): peel, strain, and mash, removing seeds. Stir in one tablespoon lemon juice. Spoon over pudding, fruit cocktail, or ice cream.

Persimmon marmalade: cook ripe persimmons in a double boiler; strain through sieve. To two quarts pulp, add $\frac{1}{2}$ pint orange juice. Cook down, add sugar to taste. Bottle and seal.

Persimmon butter: cook and strain persimmons. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon soda to each cup pulp. Sweeten and flavor with spices or orange rind. Cook thoroughly and bottle.

Persimmon-nut bread: $\frac{1}{3}$ cup shortening; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar; two eggs; $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups flour; two teaspoons baking powder; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt; $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon soda; one cup mashed persimmons; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped hickory-nut or black-walnut meats. Cream shortening, add sugar and eggs; beat well. Sift dry ingredients, add to creamed mixture alternately with persimmons and nuts. Pour in greased loaf pan and bake at 350° for one hour.

Persimmons can be used instead of prunes or pineapple for upside-down cake, or used as a topping with nuts and sugar on coffee cake.

Groundcherry (*Physalis virginiana*, *Physalis heterophylla*, *Physalis pubescens*) (family Solanaceae)

(cape gooseberry, husk tomato, bladder cherry)

The groundcherries are low, spreading plants, the various species differing mostly in the amount of hairiness on the leaves. These natives of Peru and Mexico often appear in cultivated gardens or in waste places. Leaves are variable in shape or form. Flowers are an inverted bell, pale yellow with

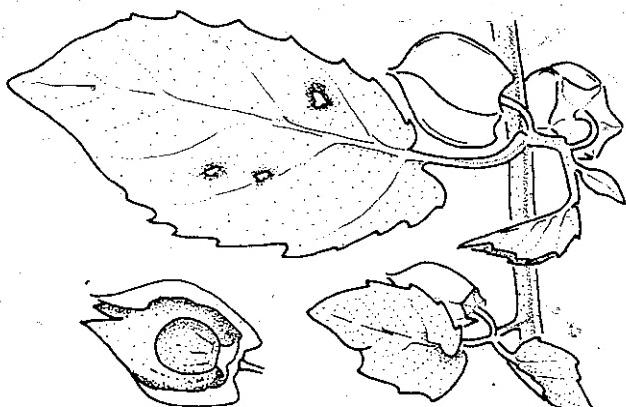


PLATE 276. Groundcherry

a brownish center. The edible cherries, yellow when ripe, are enclosed in a papery husk. The husk also turns yellow when the cherry is ripe. The cherries are used in preserves or pies. DO NOT EAT THE LEAVES, for they have the poisonous properties of most members of the nightshade family.

Physalis viscosa is a closely related species distinguished by very sticky stems and leaves. *Physalis edulis (oxocarpa)* the cultivated garden ground-cherry, or strawberry tomato, will also escape and naturalize or reseed itself in old gardens. This plant has slightly larger fruits with a bright yellow or purplish-red cherry.

Many people are very fond of groundcherries, others have to develop a taste for them. Mrs. Norton said, "I had a daughter who was always picking groundcherries and eating them, but I never did like them. I'd have to be real hungry to eat them."

Jake Waldroop says, "They are a sweetish, good-flavored thing. They are small, something like the end of your little finger. They come up in the summertime and die down in the fall. You don't use them much until after the frost falls on them. That's when they're really good. They're white-looking with little stripes and have a husk on them. You take the husk off and the cherry is inside."

Groundcherries are often dried and used for sweetening. When preserved, they need very little sugar.

Groundcherry pie: one pint hulled cherries; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white sugar; $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar; one tablespoon butter; one tablespoon quick-cooking tapioca; juice and grated rind of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon. Combine and bake between two pie crusts.

Baked groundcherries: mix groundcherries with eggs, milk, and a little flour. Bake at low heat until firm. Serve with milk or cream.

Groundcherry sauce: one quart washed groundcherries; two cups honey; one cup water; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon; one tablespoon lemon juice. Boil.

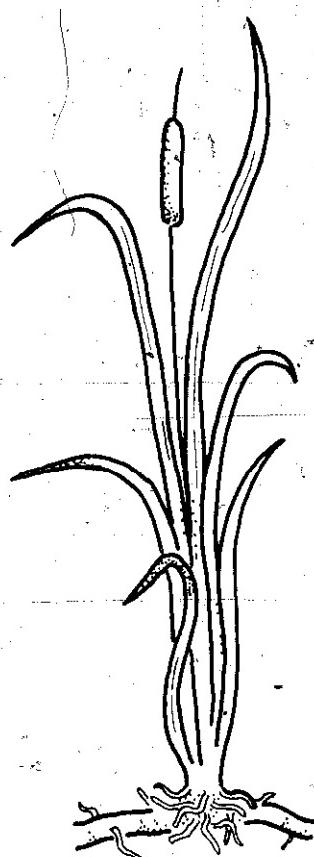
Tops, bottoms, and in-betweens—this is a designation for a variety of wild plant foods that do not fit any specific category. We might bring them under miscellaneous but that seems a dull way of treating a most interesting assortment of plants. They are given here in botanical order.

Cattail (*Typha latifolia*) (family *Typhaceae*)
(reed-mace)

This is the familiar cattail of marshes and stream banks, with tall stalks, broad grassy leaves, and a brown flower spike. Early in the season, the flower spike is double and the top, or staminate part, rich with yellow pollen. All parts of the plant are edible, from the rhizome roots to the young green spikes. Young shoots can be a substitute for asparagus. The bulb-like sprouts can be peeled and boiled as a vegetable, or pickled for salads. The young shoots are a good substitute for poke salad. Roots can also be ground into meal or flour said to be the equal of corn or rice. Rich in pollen, this yellow substance can be gathered and used in baking.

Cattail shoots may be boiled or creamed. Cut the whole sprout up and roll in meal. Add salt and pepper and fry them. Or, boil young cattails one inch long for fifteen to twenty minutes and cover with cream sauce.

PLATE 277 Cattail



Cattail flapjacks: two cups pollen; two cups flour; four teaspoons baking powder; one teaspoon salt; two eggs; one cup milk; $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups water; one tablespoon sugar or syrup; bacon drippings. Mix and fry in a greased pan.

Cattail pancakes: boil roots into gruel; then dry. Mix with an egg, milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and margarine. Drop by tablespoons into a well-greased cast-iron skillet. Serve with cooked blueberries or stewed apples.

Cattail soup: cook in water until tender and drain. Add water, milk, salt, and pepper; top with cubes of toasted bread before serving.

Nut grass (*Cyperus rotundus*) (family Cyperaceae)

(coco-grass, earth almond, rush nut, ground nut)

A small weedy sedge, native of Europe, but naturalized everywhere in waste places. It has long, running rootstocks bearing small, hard tubers at intervals. These are usually too hard to eat raw, but can be cooked and used as you would use any nuts. Nuts can be ground into meal that makes a good cooked cereal.

Nut sedge (*Cyperus esculentus*)

(coco-sedge, yellow galingale, chufa, ground nut)

This larger sedge grows in damp, weedy places. It has rather stout stems up to eighteen inches high, with yellowish divided flower heads. Sweet nutty tubers with a tough, dry rind occur on the roots. These can be ground into flour.

PLATE 278 Nut grass



Chufa drink: soak tubers eight hours. Mash, add one quart water and $\frac{1}{2}$ pound sugar to each $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of tubers. Strain through a sieve and serve as a drink.

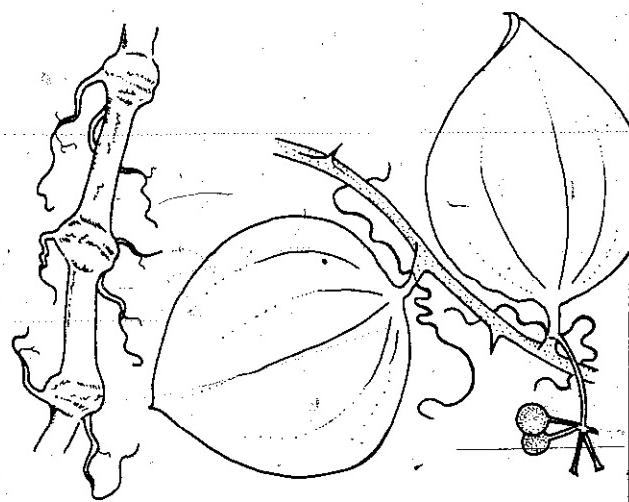
Chufa (ground nut) bread: $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups warm water; two packages active dry yeast; one tablespoon salt; one tablespoon melted margarine or butter; seven cups unsifted flour; one cup peanut butter; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup softened margarine or butter; one egg white; one tablespoon cold water; $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped ground nuts. Measure warm water into a warm mixing bowl. Sprinkle in yeast and stir. Add salt and melted margarine. Add flour and stir until dough is sticky. Place in a greased bowl; let rise one hour. Turn dough on a floured board. Roll half into an oblong pan, cover with peanut butter, softened margarine, and ground nuts. Cover with rest of dough. Roll up and seal. Brush top with egg white. Bake in 450° oven for 25 minutes.

Chiney-brier (*Smilax pseudochina*, *Smilax bona-nox*, *Smilax glauca*, *Smilax rotundifolia*), (family Liliaceae)

(greenbrier, ground nut, sarsaparilla, saw brier, prickly bamboo, China brier, cat brier, biscuit leaves)

The chiney-briers are weedy vines found everywhere, with tough prickly stems, oval to arrow-shaped leaves, and fuzzy, very sweet-scented green flowers followed by blue or black berries. The tips of the arching new shoots

PLATES 279-280 Greenbriers: *Smilax glauca* (left) and *Smilax rotundifolia* (right).



are very good to eat. Before the days of commercial gelatin desserts, the knobby roots of all four species of Smilax were dug and used for food. The berries have been used for seasoning.

Gather greenbrier shoots when tender enough to snap, and use them raw in salad, or cook into a cream soup. They can be combined with lettuce or other greens, or used as a substitute in any recipe that calls for asparagus.

Chop up or grind roots, and cover with water; strain, leaving powdery residue. This will be an edible powder of a reddish color. Mix with warm water and honey for a delicious jelly; cook into gruel for invalids; fry in hot grease for hotcakes; or use as a cornmeal substitute for fritters or bread.

Wild bean vine (*Phaseolus polystachios*) (family Leguminosae)
(wild kidney bean)

A slender, twining vine, found in rich, damp woodlands and along streams. It is a perennial with tri-divided bright green leaves, and small bunches of white or pale purple flowers. The beans occur in small pods, are edible, and can be used as one uses dried garden beans, but they are difficult to obtain, as the pods coil up and expel the seeds as soon as they ripen. The round, white tubers on the roots are called ground nuts.

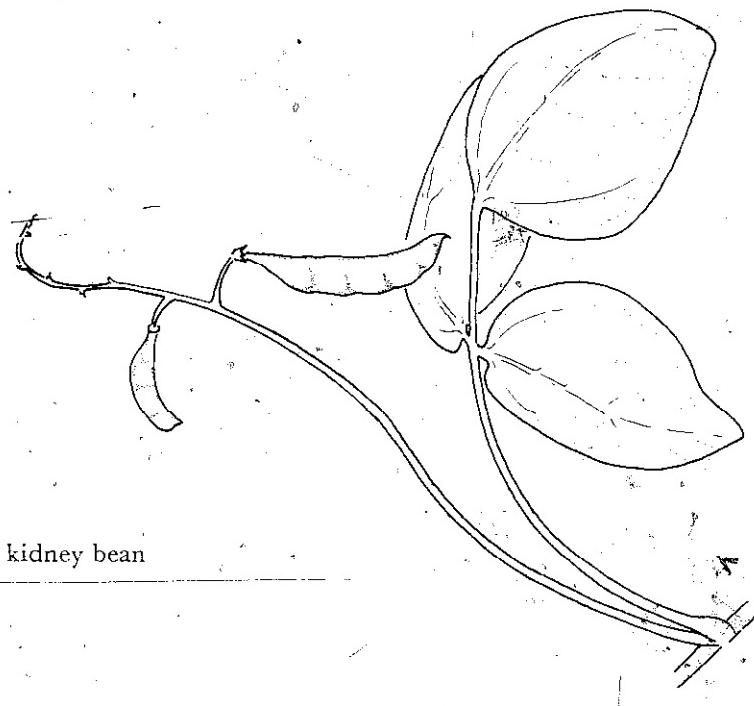


PLATE 281 Wild kidney bean

Hog peanut (*Amphicarpa bracteata*)
(wild peanut, hog vine)

This slender, vine twines to seven feet over other shrubbery. It has tri-divided light green leaves followed by two kinds of pods: those at the upper part of the vine have slender pods with small mottled beans; those near the base of the plant bend and go underground (like peanuts) where they form fleshy underground pods. Both are edible after boiling, but have a rather poor taste.



PLATE 282 Hog peanut

Ground nut (*Apios americana*)
(sprig nut, Indian potato, bear potato)

A four- to five-foot vine found in very wet places, usually growing in great patches. Leaves have five to seven leaflets. There are clusters of maroon, sweet-smelling flowers in midsummer. The roots have a string of small rhizomes, or thickened tubers, that have a delicious, nutlike flavor. They can be roasted, boiled, or sliced and fried. Cooked in syrup, they are superior to yams. THEY ARE NOT CONSIDERED EDIBLE UNTIL COOKED.



PLATES 283-284. Ground nut: flowers (left) and tubers (right).

In the mountains, the names wild sweet potatoes, or pig potatoes, seem to be given to the tubers of the wild bean (*Phaseolus*) or the ground nut (*Apios*). The hog peanut (*Amphicarpa*) is not as common as the other two leguminous vines, but was probably used for food where it was available.

Roast the wild sweet potatoes in ashes; or peel and slice, boil in salted water so they won't turn dark, and fry in grease, adding brown sugar, salt, and pepper.

You can make a delicious pudding out of ground nuts by steaming them. Tie them in a cloth with a mixture of flour, sugar, and an egg and hang over your boiler to steam.

Honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) (family Leguminosae)

The honey locust is a small, very thorny tree found in hedge rows and waste places, woods' edges, and rocky outcrops. It has compound leaves, and small, honey-sweet, greenish-yellow flowers in April and May. The long pods contain many small seeds, and a small amount of sweet edible pulp. These have been used to make a drink, ground into meal, or used with persimmons in persimmon beer.

The honey locust tree produces long, flat seed pods which are dark brown or black when ripe. They may be eaten raw, as there's a honey flavor in the pod.

Honey locust beans: shell beans from pods, soak overnight, and boil.

Locust bread: dry pods and grind into meal for bread.

Jerusalem artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*) (familly Compositae)
 (bread root)

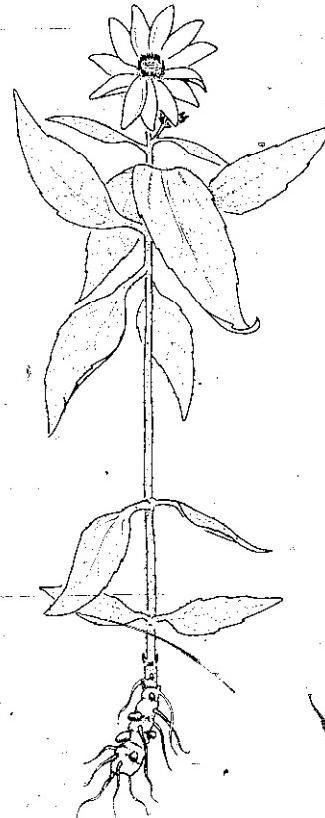
This tall sunflower grows to twelve feet in rich bottom lands where it has naturalized. It is also found in waste places and persists in old garden sites. The leaves are opposite, ovate, and rough-hairy. Large yellow flowers with greenish centers appear in autumn. The root tubers are high in calories and are a very desirable food. They can be used raw or cooked, and should be harvested in late fall or early spring. Attached to the roots of a tall, straight plant, they look similar to a knobby potato, and can be cooked and eaten like regular potatoes. They are good sliced raw and salted. They're also good sliced and fried in grease. Some use them diced in relish along with peppers and onions or just boil them until they're tender and serve with a plain white sauce.

Boiled artichokes: one pound unpeeled, shredded, or diced artichokes. Simmer in hot milk, add a pinch of salt and parsley or onion before serving.

Baked artichokes: slice thin in a baking dish, cover with white sauce and bake. Or combine with wild onions and grated cheese in a baking dish and bake.

Artichoke relish: five quarts Jerusalem artichokes; three pounds white cabbage; six green peppers; one quart onions, coarsely ground; three pounds

PLATE 285 Jerusalem artichoke



sugar; one small box mustard; one gallon vinegar; two tablespoons turmeric; one tablespoon black pepper; three tablespoons white mustard seed; $\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour. Scrub artichokes, cut fine, and soak in one gallon of water with two cups salt for twenty-four hours. Coarsely grind the peppers, cabbage, and onion, and mix with sugar; black pepper, mustard seed, dry mustard, and vinegar. Bring mixture to boil, and cook until vegetables are clear. Add artichokes, return to a boil, and stir in turmeric. Pour immediately into hot sterilized jars and seal.

Pickled artichoke: $\frac{1}{2}$ peck artichoke root; two quarts vinegar; $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds brown sugar; $\frac{1}{4}$ pound mustard; one ounce white mustard seed; one ounce pepper; one ounce turmeric; $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cloves; three teaspoons allspice; two sticks cinnamon. Peel artichokes and sprinkle well with salt. Slice and salt a few white onions. Let stand twenty-four hours, then wash off well. Cook apple vinegar, sugar, and spices together a few minutes. Drop in artichokes and onion to heat through. Seal while hot. [NOTE: Spices may be omitted and horseradish used instead.]

Jerusalem artichoke pickle: two quarts artichokes, scraped and peeled; one pint vinegar; two onions or several white multiplying onions; $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups brown sugar; two tablespoons salt; one teaspoon allspice; one teaspoon turmeric. Boil vinegar, sugar, and spices ten minutes. Add onions and artichokes, and boil ten minutes. Seal in jars.

Thistle (*Cirsium altissimum*) (family Compositae)

The thistle is found in damp fields, marshes, and along streams. It has a tall, straight stem from a perennial root. Leaves are sparingly spiny-edged, and a gray-green color. The showy lavender flower heads attract many bees and butterflies. Seeds are winged. The young thistle stems, when peeled, are edible and pickles can be made from them. Make them as you would a sweet cucumber pickle.

Fried thistle rings: peel young thistle stems, cut into rings. Fry in butter and serve hot.

Stuffing: boil peeled thistle stems in salt water. Use to stuff fish.



WILD TEAS

A variety of plants can be gathered and used to make pleasant-tasting teas. Some of these (sassafras, sweet birch, and spicewood) were included in the section of spring plant foods in *Foxfire 2* (pp. 49-53). The plants given here, gathered in midsummer, seem to have a special quality, as if all the goodness of summer sun and showers was embodied in their leaves and flowers.

Sometimes various plants are combined in special mixtures. For example, "fatigue tea" combines nettles, dandelions, and yarrow. Garden tea is a mixture of strawberry leaves, grape leaves, and rose petals.

The mountain people used teas as beverages and as tonics. They would usually gather the plants in the proper season, remove the leaves or roots, and dry them. The dried material would be stored in jars or in a dry place and used as needed. They would keep all year if dried properly. Honey or syrup was used for sweetening, if desired.

Agrimony (*Agrimonia parviflora*, *Agrimonia rostellata*), (family Rosaceae)
(tormentil, church steeples, cathedral plant)

The small agrimony (*A. parviflora*) and the large agrimony (*A. rostellata*) are very similar, except for size. Both are found along roadsides, in wet ditches, and around old homesites. They are perennials, with hairy stems and compound leaves. The leaves are very spicy when crushed. The small yellow flowers appear in midsummer and are followed by sticky seeds that adhere to clothing.

Though not as well known as some of the tea plants, both the flowers and the leaves make a fragrant tea. A lady near Blairsville called it "spice-tea," and said it tasted like "apples with cinnamon." Gather the leaves and flowers and boil, strain, and serve with lemon or sugar.

Red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) (family Leguminosae)

Red clover is common along roadsides and in old fields and pastures. It grows to two feet, with tri-divided leaves, each leaflet often marked with white. Occasionally leaves produce the lucky "four-leaf clovers." The deep rose-red flowers appear in May, but blossom late in autumn. The flowers are very sweet-scented and favorites of bumblebees.

The flowers are edible and can be used in spring salads or brewed into



PLATE 286 Red clover

tea. It is known as a "spring bracer" and when combined with honey made a good-tasting tea that was also a spring tonic. Clover blossoms are often combined with mints in midsummer or used in "old field tea"—made of sage, mullein, clover blossoms, and basswood blooms. Most of these teas were used to relax the drinker, and they did.

It is said that red clover blooms can be combined with apples to make a pleasant-tasting jelly.

Basswood (*Tilia americana*) (family Tiliaceae)
(linden, bee tree, bast, daddywort)

The basswood is a tall tree of the rich mountain coves, with large, heart-shaped leaves and smooth bark. The very fragrant, creamy-white flowers appear in early summer. Bees seek out basswood after sourwood, and basswood honey is a clear white, flavorsome honey produced in some areas of the mountains. The nectar within the flowers is about 50 per cent pure sugar. The blossoms are gathered for tea or used in fruit desserts and candy.

Basswood blossom tea: a teaspoonful of flowers for each pint of water. Strain and add sugar or honey, or drop a couple of cloves into the pot.

Basswood bark tea: peel the bark and boil it. Strain and add sugar to taste. It was sometimes used for colds and flu.

MINTS

Our most flavorsome midsummer teas come from the many species of aromatic mints. Used alone, or in combination with other plants, they are considered very healthful as well as good-tasting.

Ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*, *Nepeta glechoma*) (family Labiate)
(jill-over-the-ground, lizzie-run-around-the-hedge, hedge maids, tun-hoof, maymaids, catsfoot, field-balm, heart's ease, run-away-robin)

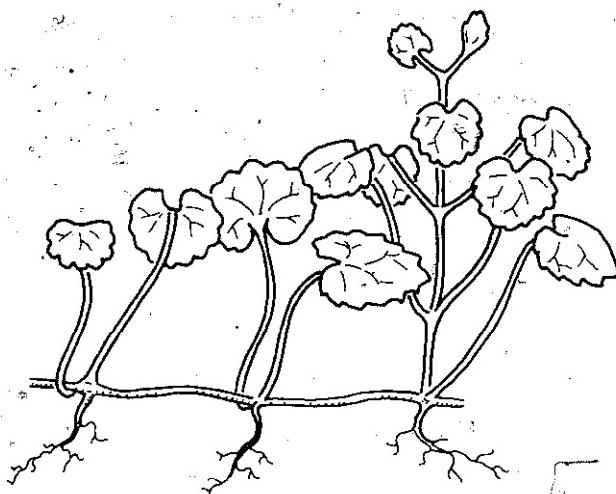


PLATE 287 Ground ivy

Ground ivy is a small, creeping ground cover which roots at the joints, with oval, scalloped leaves and small blue mint flowers. It forms large patches in waste places or in damp meadows. It is naturalized from Europe.

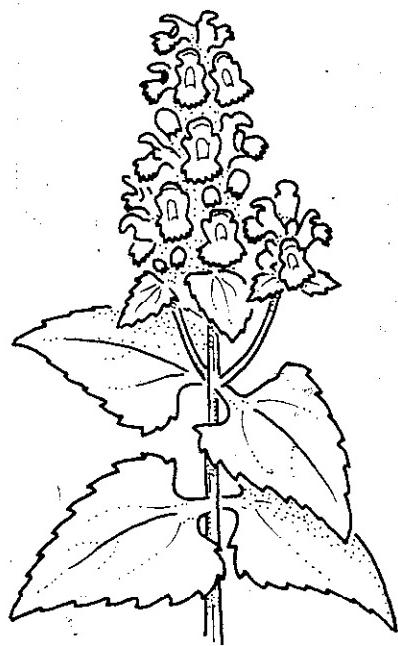
Ground ivy tea: gather the vine in summer and fall. Make the tea by boiling six or seven leaves in a pint of water. Strain and sweeten to taste. Ethel Corn said, "Ground ivy does make a pleasant tea for anybody t'drink, and old people was bad t'give it to babies for colic." Jake Waldroop says it was given to babies with hives to break the hives up. Another recipe for tea is to use $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh-picked, chopped leaves with one cup water. Boil and strain, sweeten with syrup or honey. Use hot or cold to reduce fever.

Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*) (family Labiate)
(owl eyes)

Catnip grows from one to three feet high in waste places. It has pale green, woolly, very odorous leaves, and a dense whorl of velvety, lavender-white flowers. It is a native of Europe which was brought over to this country by the first settlers, and became a naturalized weed.

Catnip has a very strange effect upon most cats—they find it exhilarating. When catnip is brewed into tea it has just the opposite effect upon humans, for it acts as a sedative, calming nerves and inducing sleep. Catnip tea

PLATES 288-289 Catnip



would prevent nightmares and lighten nervous disorders. The leaves were often chewed to relieve the pain of toothache. Catnip was given for colds with boneset or mint. The leaves have a high content of vitamins A and C. It is best to gather catnip when it is flowering. Jake Waldroop says catnip was also called rabbit tobacco. "Lots of people would smoke it."

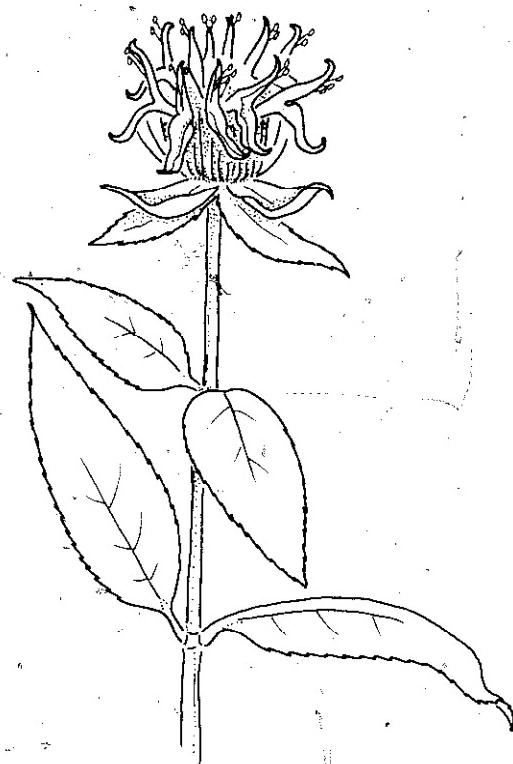
Catnip tea: pour a pint of boiling water over a half cup of broken stems and leaves. Let stand several minutes, then strain. Combine catnip leaves with peppermint and chamomile for a good-tasting tea.

Oswego tea (*Monarda didyma*) (family Labiate)

(red bee balm, red horsemint)

Bee balm grows in rich, wet places in the mountains. It has ribbed stems to three feet high, with dark green, opposite leaves that are very aromatic. The flower heads are bright scarlet and attract hummingbirds. The flowers are sometimes floated in lemonade or iced teas for flavor or color. Leaves are gathered and used fresh or dried for an invigorating tea. Oswego tea is supposed to stimulate the appetite and induce sleep.

PLATE 290 Oswego tea



Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
(purple bee balm)

The lavender bee balm has opposite green leaves, often purple-tinged, and purplish stems. It grows in colonies in open woodlands and along roadsides. The leaves are aromatic. Flowers vary from pale lavender to a deep magenta or purple. Leaves have been used as flavoring in sausage; and it is a favorite for mint tea.

Pale bergamot (*Monarda clinopodia*)

Pale bergamot grows in mountain woods. It has flowers of a pale greenish-white, less showy than those of the other species. The narrow green leaves have a mint-camphor odor.

Mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum incanum*) (family *Labiatae*)
(calamint, little fish flower, white mint, white horsemint)

Mountain mint is common on hillsides, in open woods, and along trails and roadsides. It is a tall plant, and its leaves have a frosted appearance. The flowers are white and very aromatic.

The leaves make a very pleasing tea, and are especially good combined with lemons or oranges in a cool drink. They may also be used for candied



PLATE 291 Mountain mint

mint leaves or as flavorings in candies or frostings. Gather mint leaves in the summer when the plant is young, just before or after it blooms. Boil the leaves in water, strain, and sweeten with honey.

Mrs. Hershel Keener said that she used to make it all the time. "Make a good strong tea out of it. It's good for colds and it might keep you from having pneumonia if you took it in time."

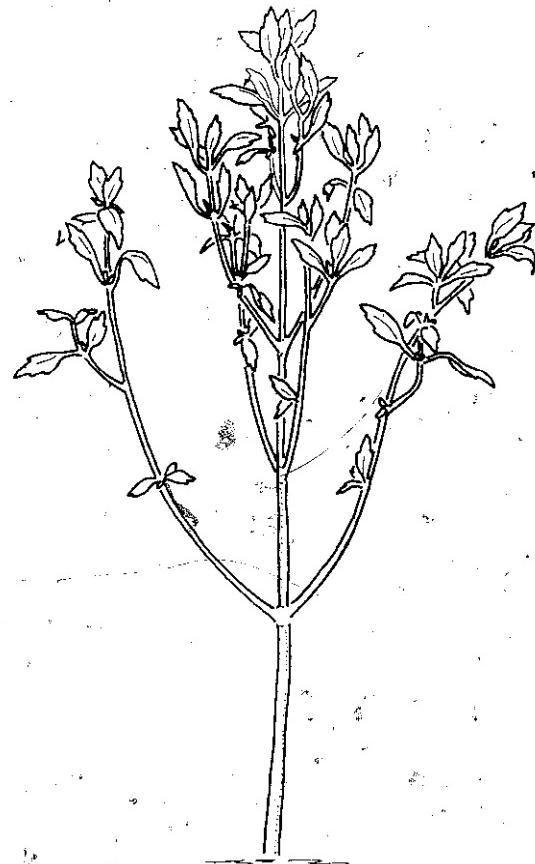
Pennyroyal (*Hedeoma pulegioides*)
(penny-rile, squaw-mint)

American pennyroyal is a small annual plant, with very odorous leaves and small lavender flowers. It grows in waste places, often appearing as a weedy garden plant. It has been called the best-tasting of the wild mints, making tea that was both potent and healthful, supposedly helpful in curing coughs and colds.

Mrs. Mann Norton described it as "a kind of springy little bush. Gather it when it's green and tie it up in the house and keep it for tea. You can use it after it's dried just the same as when it's green."

Rev. Morgan told us that "they would sell pennyroyal in the apothecaries. People would boil the pennyroyal plant, the whole plant, and then catch the fumes from it and condense the fumes through a wormlike still. Then they bottled the fumes. I don't know what it was used for, but the druggists used it in medicines."

PLATE 292 Pennyroyal



Cora Ledbetter said that her family used to boil it and "just pour a person who was snake-bitten full of that to make him vomit."

Pennyroyal tea: use fresh or dried leaves. Do not boil. Merely pour hot water over it and let stand for a few minutes. Flavor with syrup or honey.

Pennyroyal shoots can also be added to fruit salad. A few sprigs of pennyroyal rubbed on your face or hands will keep gnats and other insects away.

Curled mint (*Mentha crispa*) (family Labiateae)

Curled mint persists around old homesites and is sparingly naturalized along streams. It has very woolly, gray-green leaves, and a pleasing mint odor. It is good to use in iced tea, or to make mint tea.

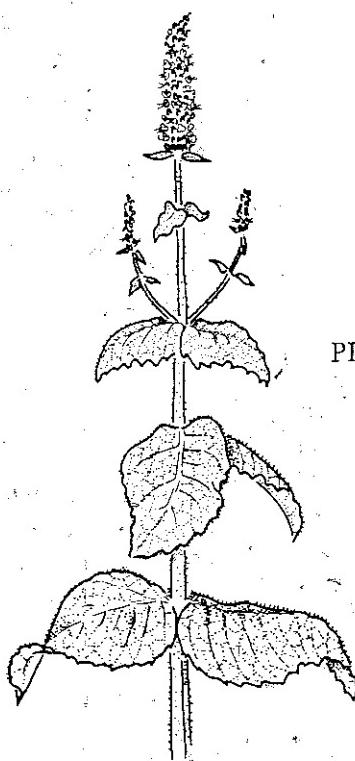


PLATE 293. Curled mint

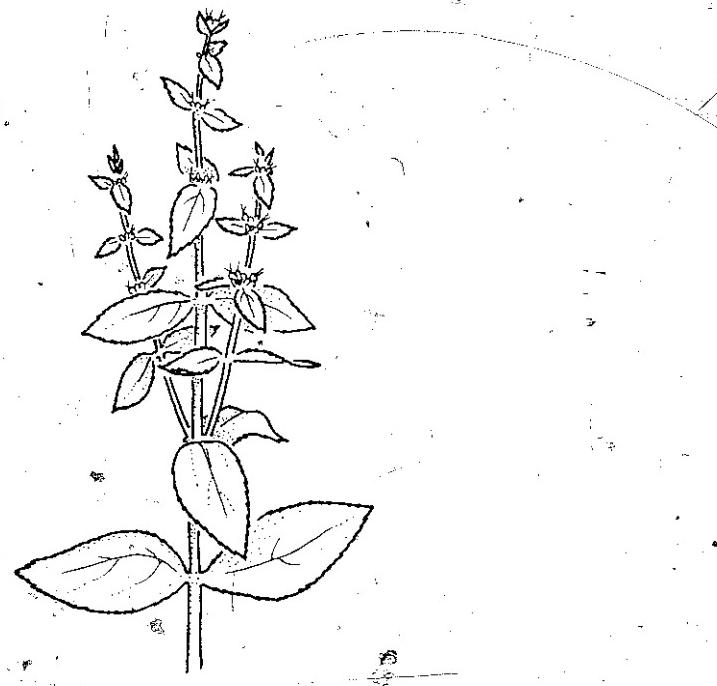
Spearmint (*Mentha viridis*)

(green mint, roman mint, lamb mint)

Spearmint is a one to two foot perennial growing in old garden sites or along streams. It has dark green, very pleasant-smelling leaves, and pale purple flowers. It can be dried for winter use as flavoring or for tea. It is favored for lamb sauce, or cooked with English peas.

Spearmint tea: steep mint in water to desired strength. Sweeten with honey.

PLATE 294 Spearmint

Peppermint (*Mentha piperata*)

Peppermint grows in wet places, and is naturalized around springs and streams. It has very strong-smelling dark green foliage and pale purple flowers. Peppermint tea is a remedy for colic, and is considered a sleep-inducing sedative.

PLATE 295 Kenny Runion
with peppermint.